

A  
DISCOURSE  
Concerning the  
Unchangeable Obligations  
OF  
NATURAL RELIGION,  
AND THE  
Truth and Certainty  
OF THE  
*Christian Revelation.*

Being Eight SERMONS Preach'd at the Cathedral-Church of St. Paul, in the Year 1705, at the Lecture Founded by the Honourable ROBERT BOTLE Esq;

By Samuel Clark, M. A. Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY, and Chaplain to the Right Reverend Father in God JOHN, Lord Bishop of Ely.

*The Second Edition.*

Isa. 5, 20. *Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.*

Rom. 1, 22. *Professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools.*

1 Cor. 2, 10. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*

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A

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T O T H E

Most Reverend Father in God

T H O M A S

Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury* ;  
and Primate of all *England* :

Sir *HENRY ASHURST*, Ba-  
ronet ;

Sir *JOHN ROTHERAM*, Knight,  
Serjeant at Law ;

*JOHN EVELIN*, Esquire ;

Trustees appointed by the Honou-  
rable *ROBERT BOYLE*,  
Esquire,

This Discourse is humbly De-  
dicated.

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TO THE

REVEREND FATHERS OF THE

THOMAS

First Archbishop of Canterbury  
and Vicar of the Island.

BY

JOHN ROBERTSON

JOHN ROBERTSON

Printed by the Rev. J. R. Robertson

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



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# THE PREFACE.

**I** Should not have presumed to publish these Papers in Vindication of Natural and Revealed Religion, after so many excellent Discourses already written upon that Subject; had I not thought my self obliged to it, in order to pursue more fully the design of the Honourable Founder of this Lecture, and to answer the expectation of the Most Reverend and the Honourable Trustees, appointed by him. The Honourable Robert Boyle Esq; was a Person no less zealously solicitous for the propagation of true Religion and the practise of Piety and Virtue, than diligent and successful in improving Experimental Philosophy, and enlarging our Knowledge of Nature. And it was his settled Opinion, that the advancement and increase of Natural Knowledge, would always be of Service to the Cause and Interest of true Religion, in opposition to Atheists and Unbelievers of all sorts. Accordingly he in his Life-time made excellent Use of his own Observations to this purpose, in all his Writings; and made Provision after his Death, for carrying on the same Design perpetually. In pursuance of which End, I endeavoured, in my former Discourse, to strengthen

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*and confirm the Arguments which prove to us the Being and Attributes of God, partly by metaphysical Reasoning, and partly from the Discoveries (principally those that have been lately made) in Natural Philosophy: And in the present Treatise, I have attempted, in a plainer and easier Method, to establish the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation. If what I have said, may in any measure promote the Interest of true Religion in this sceptical and profane Age, and answer the Design for which this Lecture was founded; I have my End.*

*It may perhaps be expected, that I should take some notice of certain Remarks, which have been published upon my former Sermons. Had the Author of those Remarks entered into the Merits of the Cause, or offered any considerable Reasons in opposition to what I had laid down; I should have thought my self obliged to give him a particular Answer. But since his Book is made up chiefly of Raillery, and gross Misconstructions; and All that he pretends to say by way of Argument, depends entirely upon Supposition of the Truth of the Cartesian Hypothesis, which the best Mathematicians in the World have demonstrated to be false; I presume it may be sufficient, to show here the Insincerity of that Author, and the Weakness of his Reasoning, by a few brief Observations.*

*The*

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*The only Argument he alleges against me in his whole Book, is This : That if we know not distinctly what the † Essence of God, and what the Essence of Matter is ; we cannot possibly demonstrate them at all, to be two different Essences.*

† Note, that in this whole Question, the Word *Essence* is not to be taken in the proper Metaphysical Sense of the Word, as signifying *That by which a thing is what*

*it is :* For in that Sense, the *Attributes* of God do constitute his *Essence*, and *Solidity* or *Impenetrability* is the *Essence* of *Matter* : But *Essence* is all along to be understood, as signifying the same with *Substance*.

*To which I answer. 'Tis plain we know not the Essences of Things by Intuition ; but can only reason about them from what we know of their different Properties or Attributes. Now from the demonstrable Attributes of God, and from the known Properties of Matter, we have as unanswerable Reasons to convince and satisfy us that their Essences are entirely different, though we know not distinctly what those Essences are ; as our Faculties can afford us, in judging of any the certainest things whatsoever. For instance : The demonstrable Attributes of God, are, that He is Self-Existent, Independent, Eternal, Infinite, Unchangeable, Incorruptible, Intelligent, Free, All-powerful, Wise, Just and Good. The known Properties of Matter, are, that it is \* not Necessary or Self-Existent, but Dependent, Finite, (nay, Demon- that it fills but a few very small and inconsi- strat. pag, derable portions of Space,) that it is Divi. 42, &c. sible, Passive, Unintelligent, and consequently & 48. & 96.*



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incapable of any Active Powers. Now nothing can be more certain and evident, than that the Substances to which these incompatible Attributes or Properties belong, or the Essences from which they flow, are entirely different one from the other; though we do not distinctly know what the inmost Substances or Essences Themselves are. If any Man will think a mere Hypothesis (the Cartesian or any other) concerning the inmost Nature of Substances, to be a more satisfactory Discovery of the different Essences of Things, than we can make by Reasoning thus from their demonstrable Properties; and will chuse rather to draw fond Consequences from such Hypotheses and Fictions, founded upon no Proof at all, than to make use of such Philosophy as is grounded only upon clear Reason or good Experiments; I know no help for it, but he must be permitted to enjoy his Opinion quietly.

The rest of the Book is All either an indecent and unreasonable railing against the learned Mr Lock; from whom I neither cited any one Passage, nor (that I know of) borrowed any Argument from him; And therefore is altogether Impertinent. Or else it consists of gross Misrepresentations of my Sense, and very unfair Constructions and false Citations of my Words; of which I shall presently give some Instances.

The

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*The first 8, and the 35th and 36th Pages of the Remarks, are spent in attempting to prove, that if we do not first know what the Essence of God and what the Essence of Matter, is; (that is, if the Cartesian Hypothesis concerning the Essences of Spiritual and Material Substance, be not granted to be true;) there is no way left, by which it can be proved at all, that the Essence of God and Matter is not one and the same. To which I have already given an answer; viz. that from the demonstrable Attributes of God, and from the known Properties of Matter, we have as absolute certainty of their Essences or Substances being different, though we do not distinctly know what those Essences are; as our Faculties inable us to attain in any Metaphysical Question: And that he who will not allow this, to be sufficient Proof in the present case; but chooses rather to take up with a mere Hypothesis or Fiction, concerning the Essences of Things; I think needs not be disputed with.*

*Pag. 12. The Author of the Remarks asserts, that Des-Cartes and his Followers have Mathematically proved, that the Essence of Matter consists in Length, Breadth and Depth. And upon this confident Assertion, his whole Book depends in every part. To this therefore I answer, that That Hypothesis is really so far from being Mathematically proved to be True, that on the contrary He cannot but know, (if he knows any thing of these Matters,) that the greatest Mathematicians in the present Age, Men confessed-  
ly*

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ly greater in that Science than any that ever lived before them, have clearly proved (as I before said) that it is † absolutely False. And not to take the least notice of This, throughout his whole Book, argues either great Insincerity, or great Ignorance.

† See  
Sir Isaac  
Newton's  
*Principia*,  
pag. 383  
& 411.

*I had said (Demonstrat. pag. 33,) that to Imagine an Eternal and Infinite Nothing, was being reduced to the Necessity of Imagining a Contradiction or Impossibility. For this he argues against me (Remark. pag. 14,) as if I had asserted, that it was possible to imagine an Eternal and Infinite Nothing; whereas I asserted that it was an express Contradiction so to do. This is great Insincerity.*

*I had charged the Cartesians (Demonstrat. pag. 33) with being unavoidably reduced to the Absurdity of making Matter a necessarily-existing Being. In citing this Passage, (Remark. pag. 14 and 15) he represents me as saying that this Absurdity consisted in making Extension necessary: Though he knew that in that very Passage I supposed Matter and Extension to be entirely different Things. This likewise is great Insincerity.*

*I had said (Demonstrat. pag. 35) that the Idea of Immenfity was an Idea that no way belonged to Matter. Instead of this, he cites me asserting ridiculously (Remark. pag. 15,) that Extension no way belongs to Matter.*



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*As if that which is not Immense or Infinite, is therefore not extended at all. This is the greatest Disingenuity in the World.*

Remark. pag. 15. *He says ; I am sure this Author cannot produce One, no not One Cartesian, that ever made Matter a necessarily-existing Being ; that ever contradicted himself in Words, upon this Subject ; that ever was mightily, or not mightily, or at all perplexed with what Mr Clarke calls his Argument ; nay, that ever heard of that Thing he calls his Argument. Why are they thus misrepresented and imposed upon ? To this I answer : It had been sufficient to make good my charge, to have shown that from the Cartesian Hypothesis it followed by unavoidable consequence, that Matter must be a necessarily-existing Being ; though the Cartesians themselves had not seen that Consequence. Yet I cited moreover a Passage out of Regis, wherein 'tis plain He perceived and owned that Consequence. But because the Remarker seems not satisfied with this, and pretends to triumph here with great pleasure and assurance ; I will for once comply with his Challenge, and produce him Another, and That an unexceptionable Cartesian, namely Des-Cartes himself, who Was greatly perplexed with the Argument I mentioned, and was unavoidably reduced to make Matter a necessarily-existing Being, and at the same time Did contradict himself in Words upon this Subject. It was Objected to Des-Cartes by some very Learned Men,*

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\* Quæro an a Deo fieri poruisset ut mundus esset finitus. *Epist. ad Cartesium, 68 Partis primæ.*

Nondum illud possum concoquere, eam esse inter res corporcas connexionem, ut nec mundum Deus creare poruerit nisi infinitum, nec ullum corpus in nihilum redigere, quin eo ipso reneatur aliud paris quantitatis statim creare. *Epist. 5, Partis secundæ.*

† Puto implicare Contradictionem, ut Mundus sit finitus. *Cartes. Epist. 69 Partis primæ.*

Mihi autem non videtur de ulla unquam re esse dicendum, ipsam a Deo fieri non posse: Cum enim *Omnis Ratio Veri & Boni*, ab ejus *Omnipotentia* dependeat; nequidem dicere ausim, Deum facere non posse ut Mons sit sine Valle, vel ut Unum & Duo non sint Tria; sed tantum dico, talia implicare contradictionem in meo conceptu; quod idem etiam de Spatio, quod sit plane vacuum, &c. *Epist. 6 Partis secundæ.*

*Men, that* \* if Extension and Matter were the same thing, it seemed to them to follow, that God could neither possibly make the World finite, nor annihilate any part of Matter without creating at the same time just as much more to supply its Place. *To this He answers: † That, according to his Hypothesis, it does indeed imply a Contradiction to suppose the World to be Finite, or to suppose God annihilating any part of Matter; but yet he will not say God cannot do it, or that God cannot cause that Two and Three shall not make Five, or any other Contradiction whatsoever. Is not this making Matter a necessarily existing Being, to own that it is a Contradiction to suppose God annihilating it or setting bounds to it? Is not this Contradicting himself, for a Man to affirm (as Cartes does in all his Writ-*

*ings) that the World was Created by God and Depends upon him, and yet at the same time to declare that it implies as plain a Contradiction to suppose any part of Matter annihilable by the Power of God, as to suppose that Two and Three should*

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*Should not make Five? Is not this really a ridiculing the Power of God? And was not Des-Cartes therefore greatly perplexed with the Argument I mentioned? And is not an Hypothesis, from which such Consequences unavoidably and confessedly follow, a fine Land-mark of Distinction between Spiritual and Material Substances? and whatever opposes this Hypothesis, a \* depriving us of the* <sup>\* Remark.</sup> *Means of proving the Existence of the one* <sup>pag. 25.</sup> *only true God?*

*The Remarker humbly desires his Reader (pag. 16) to be perswaded, that he is of no particular Sect in Matters of Philosophy, but only of the Party of Truth where-ever he meets with it. Tet the same Man had declared before (pag. 12,) that he believed Des-Cartes had Mathematically proved his Hypothesis; and takes not the least Notice of its having since been fully confuted by Mathematicians confessedly far more eminent in that Science, than Des-Cartes was. This is a very singular Mark of Impartiality, and of being addicted to no Party in Matters of Philosophy.*

*Speaking of the Cartesian Argument drawn from the Idea of God, I had used these Words, (Demonstrat. pag. 37;) Our first Certainty of the Existence of God, arises not from this; that, in the Idea we frame of him in our own Minds; or rather, in the Definition that we make of the Word, [God,] as signifying a Being of all possible Perfections, we include Self-Existence;*  
*But*



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But &c. *Meaning, that, according to That Argument, Self-Existence was rather made only a part of the Definition of the Word, than proved to be a real Attribute of the Being it self. Instead of this, the Remarker (pag. 17 and 19) by a childish misunderstanding of the Syntax of the Sentence, and referring the Particle [or] to a wrong Member of the Period, cites my Words in a quite different manner; as if I had said; In the Idea we frame of God in our own Minds, or rather in the Idea we frame of him in the Definition that we make of the Word, &c. And he is very facetious (pag. 17 and 19) in ridiculing this framing of an Idea in a Definition; which he calls, as it truly is, a Real Piece of Nonsense. But when, upon the review, he finds himself the true and only Author of it, for want of understanding Grammar; I suppose it will make him more modest and careful.*

*He accuses me (Remark. pag. 18, 20, &c.) of not understanding the Cartesian Argument drawn from the Idea of God. I confess my self very ready to submit to his charge; And I can show him much learned Writers than either of Us, who have likewise † not understood that Argument. If He does understand it; he will do the World a very acceptable piece of Service, to make it out.*

† See Cudworth's System, pag. 721, &c.

*What he says in his 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th pages, is such a heap of Misconstructions, and so entirely void of Sense, that I confess I cannot at all tell what he means.*

*From*

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*From my using the Word Mere Matter, he concludes (pag. 29,) that I imagine there is another sort of Matter, which is not a mere, bare, pure, incogitative Matter; and that These Terms necessarily import this Sense. Whereas in every one of the places he cites, it is as express and evident as Words can make it, that by Mere Matter I understand the Matter of which the World consists, not as opposed to another sort of Matter, but either as † opposed to Motion and to the Form of the World, or as \* considered by it self and without the Government and Direction of a Supreme Intelligent Mind. This therefore is the highest degree of Insincerity.*

† Demon-  
strat. pag.  
47, &c.  
\* Demon-  
strat. pag.  
70, 103,  
123,

*He charges me (pag. 4 and 29 and 30) with making a Translation quite different from Spinoza's Sense and Words. How I could mis-translate what I did not translate at all, I understand not: But whether I have mis-represented Spinoza's Sence, or no, (as I think I have not,) This I can only leave to the learned World to judge.*

*I reduced Spinoza's Opinion to this; That the Material World, and every part of it, with the Order and Manner of Being of each Part, is the only Self-Existing or Ne-cessarily-Existing Being. And this I think is as clearly contained in the † Words I cited*

*test substantia. Spinoz. Ethic. Par. I. Prop. 14.*

*Una Substantia non potest produci ab alia Substantia. Prop. 6.*

*Res nullo alio modo neq; alio ordine a Deo prodici potuerunt, quam productæ sunt. Prop. 33.*

*Ad naturam substantiæ pertinet Existere. Prop. 7.*

*from*

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from him, (Demonstrat. pag. 51 and 54,) as any thing can be. Here the Remarker asserts, (pag. 30,) that Spinoza never taught this Doctrine, nay, that he taught the quite contrary. To prove which, he cites a Passage, where Spinoza affirms, that † All

† Omnes qui naturam divinam aliquo modo contemplati sunt, Deum esse Corporeum negant. *Ethic. Par. I. Prop. 15. Schol.*

who have in any degree considered the Divine Nature, deny that God is Corporeal. Now this also is extremely Insincere. For had this Author cited

here the whole Sentence of Spinoza, as he had cited it before in his 26th page; it would have appeared evidently, that Spinoza, by denying God to be Corporeal, meant only fallaciously to deny his being any particular piece of Matter, any

\* Per Corpus intelligimus quancumq; quantitatem, longam, latam, & profundam, certa aliqua figura terminatam; quo nihil absurdius de Deo, ente scilicet absolute infinito, dici potest. *Ibid.*

|| Substantiam Corpoream quæ non nisi infinita concipi potest, nulla ratione natura divina indignam esse dici potest.

\* Finite Body and of a certain Figure. For, that He believed Infinite Corporeal Substance, that is, the whole Material Universe, to be God; (besides the places I had cited from him;) he in || expresses Words acknowledges, in a Passage which this very Author cites in the 4th page of his Remarks; and maintains it at large through the whole of that

\* Schol. ad Prop. 15. Part. I.

very \* Scholium, from whence the Remarker has with the greatest Insincerity taken the present Objection. But besides: Suppose Spinoza had not explained himself in this place, and had in this single Passage contradicted what he had plainly



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*plainly taught throughout the rest of his Book; would this have been any just reason to say, that Spinoza never taught the Doctrine I imputed to him? nay, that he taught the quite contrary?*

*He charges me (pag. 32) with arguing only against the Accessories of Atheism, and leaving the Essential Hypothesis in its full force; nay, with confirming and establishing (pag. 11) Spinoza's Atheism. It seems, in the Opinion of this Author, that proving the Material World to be, not a Necessary, but a Dependent Being; made, preserved and governed, by a Self-Existent, Independent, Eternal, Infinite Mind, of perfect Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Justice, Goodness and Truth; is arguing only against the Accessories of Atheism; And that the Essential Hypothesis of Atheism is left untouched, nay confirmed and established, by all who will not presume to define the Essence of that Supreme Mind according to the Unintelligible language of the Schools, and the groundless Imagination of Des-Cartes concerning the Substance or Essence of Matter and Spirit. I confess it appears to me, on the contrary, that the Essence of Atheism lies in making God either an Unintelligent Being [such as is the Material World,] or at least a Necessary Agent [such as Spinoza makes his One Substance to be,] void of all Freedom, Wisdom, Power and Goodness; and that Other Metaphysical Disputes, are only about the Accessories. And that there is much more Ground, on the other side, to suspect that very Hypothesis, of which this Writer*

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*is so fond, to be favourable to the Atheists main Purpose. For if from Des-Cartes's Notion of the Essence of Matter, it follows (as he himself, in the Places now cited, confesses in express words,) that it implies a Contradiction to suppose the Material World Finite, or to suppose any part of Matter can be annihilated by the Power of God; I appeal to this Author, whether This does not naturally tend to make Men think Matter a Necessary and Self-Existent Being.*

*He charges me (pag. 33.) with falsely accusing Spinoza, of making God a mere Necessary Agent; and cites a passage or two out of Spinoza, wherein that Author seems to assert the contrary. The words which I cited from Spinoza, do as clearly express what I charged him with, as 'tis possible for any thing to be expressed:*

*\* A summa Dei potentia Omnia necessario effluxisse.*

*Omnia ex Necessitate Divinae Naturae determinata sunt &c.*

*Quicquid concipimus in Dei potestate esse, id necessario est.*

*Res nullo alio modo, neque alio ordine, a Deo produci potuerunt, quam productæ sunt.*

*Deum non operari ex Libertate Voluntatis.*

*See more passages to the same purpose, cited (Demonstrat. pag. 131.)*

*For he asserts plainly, that \* from the Power of God, All things proceed Necessarily; that All things are determined by the Necessity of the Divine Nature; that whatever is in the Power of God, must Necessarily exist; that things could not have been produced by God in any other Manner or Order, than they Now are; and that God does not Act by a Liberty of Will. All this, the Remarker very insincerely passes over, without,*

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out the least Notice. And the words which he cites out of Spinoza, do not at all prove the contrary to what I asserted. For when Spinoza says, that † God alone is a

Free Cause; and that God acts by the Laws of his own Nature, without being forced by Any; 'Tis evident, he does not there mean, a Freedom of

† Sequitur, solum Deum esse causam liberam.

Deus ex solis suæ naturæ legibus, & a nemine coactus agit.

Will; but only fallaciously signifies, that the Necessity by which all things exist in the manner they do, is an inward Necessity in the Nature of the Things themselves, in opposition to any Force put upon them from without; which external Force, 'tis plain indeed that [the τὸ πᾶν] the whole Universe (the God of Spinoza) cannot be subject to; because it is supposed to contain All things, within it self. But besides: Supposing (as I said before) that Spinoza had directly contradicted himself in this one passage; how would That have proved my charge against him to have been false?

He says (pag. 34) that I am guilty my self, of what I groundlessly imputed to Spinoza; viz: of making God a mere Necessary Agent. Namely, by affirming that there is a necessary Difference betwixt Good and Evil, and that there is such a thing as Fitness and Unfitness, Eternally, Necessarily, and Unchangeably, in the Nature and Reason of Things, Antecedently to Will and to all Positive or Arbitrary Appointment whatsoever. [This, he



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*says, is a groundless and positive Assertion ; and plainly imports the Eternal Necessary Co-existence of all things, as much as Spinoza's Hypothesis does. Is not this an admirable Consequence ? Because I affirm the Proportion of Things, and the Differences of Good and Evil, to be Eternal and Necessary ; that therefore I affirm the Existence of the Things themselves, to be also Eternal and Necessary ? Because I affirm the Proportion, suppose between a Sphere and a Cylinder, to be Eternal and Necessary ; that therefore I affirm the Existence of Material Spheres and Cylinders, to be likewise Eternal and Necessary ? Because I affirm the Difference between Virtue and Vice, to be Eternal and Necessary ; that therefore I affirm Men, who practise Virtue or Vice, to have existed Eternally. This Accusation shows both extreme Ignorance, and great Malice, in the Author of the Remarks.*

*I had used these words, (Demonstrat. pag. 19,) How an Eternal Duration can now be actually Past, is a thing utterly as impossible for our narrow Understandings to comprehend, as any thing, that Is Not an express Contradiction, can be imagined to be ; And yet, to say that Nothing has existed from Eternity, is to assert something still far more unintelligible, namely something that Is really an express Contradiction. Instead of this, the Remarker (pag. 39) citing my Words, with extreme Disingenuity leaves out one half of the Sentence, and makes me to say absolutely, that  
some-*

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Something is still far more unintelligible than that which is utterly impossible to be understood. Such gross Misrepresentations as these, in leaving out one part of a Sentence, to make the rest Nonsense; can very hardly proceed, but from Want of Honesty.

Lastly, (pag, 41) he says that in my Sermons there is not one Argument offered, to prove, against Spinoza, that God is a Spirit. I persuaded my self, that proving God to be a Spirit, Being absolutely distinct from the Material World, Self-existent, Intelligent, Free, All Powerful, Wise, and Good; had been proving him to be a Spirit. But, it seems no Proof is of any Force with this Author, if it be not agreeable to the Cartesian Philosophy, in which alone he seems to have any knowledge. To this therefore, I am not obliged to trouble either my self or the Reader, with giving any further Answer.

+ See Demonstrat. pag. 42 and 125.

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A  
DISCOURSE  
Concerning the  
Unalterable Obligations  
OF  
NATURAL RELIGION,  
AND THE  
Truth and Certainty  
OF THE  
*Christian Revelation.*

HAVING in a former Discourse *The Intro-*  
endeavour'd to lay firmly *duction.*  
the first Foundations of Re-  
ligion, in the certainty of  
the Existence and of the Attributes of  
God; by proving severally and di-  
stinctly :

*That* Something *must needs have ex-*  
*isted from Eternity :* And how great so-  
ever the Difficulties are, which perplex  
the Conceptions and Apprehensions we

## The Evidences of Natural

attempt to frame of an *eternal Duration* ; yet they neither ought nor can raise in any Man's Mind any doubt or scruple concerning the truth of the Assertion it self, that *Something has really been eternal.*

*That* there must have existed from Eternity some *One Unchangeable and Independent Being* ; because to suppose an eternal succession of merely dependent Beings, proceeding one from another in an endless progression without any original independent Cause at all, is supposing things that have in their own nature no necessity of existing, to be *from eternity* caused or produced by Nothing ; which is the very same absurdity and express Contradiction, as to suppose them produced by Nothing at *any determinate time.*

*That* That unchangeable and independent Being, which has existed from eternity, without any external cause of its existence ; must be *Self-existent*, that is, *Necessarily-existing.*

*That* it must of necessity be *Infinite*, or every where present ; a Being most *Simple, Uniform, Invariable, Indivisible, Incorruptible*, and infinitely removed from all such Imperfections, as are the known Qualities and inseparable Properties of the *Material World.* *That*

## *and Revealed Religion.*

3

*That* it must of necessity be but *One*; because to suppose two, or more, different Self-existent independent Principles, may be reduced to a direct contradiction.

*That* it must necessarily be an *Intelligent* Being.

*That* it must be a *Free and Voluntary*, not a *Necessary* Agent.

*That* this Being must of necessity have *Infinite Power*; and that in this Attribute is included particularly, a Possibility of creating or producing Things, and also a Possibility of communicating to Creatures the *Power of beginning Motion*, and a Possibility of enduing them with *Liberty or Freedom of Will*; which Freedom of Will is *not inconsistent* with any of the *Divine Attributes*.

*That* He must of Necessity be infinitely *Wise*.

And lastly, *That* He must necessarily be a Being of infinite *Goodness, Justice, and Truth*, and all other moral Perfections; such as become the Supreme Governour and Judge of the World.

It remains now, in order to compleat my design of proving and establishing the *Truth and Excellency* of the whole Superstructure of our most



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Holy Religion ; that I proceed upon this Foundation of the certainty of the *Being and Attributes of God*, to demonstrate in the next place the *unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion*, and the certainty of *Divine Revelation* ; in opposition to the vain arguings of certain vitious and profane Men, who, merely upon account of their Incredulity, would be thought to be strict Adherers to Reason, and sincere and diligent Inquirers into Truth ; when indeed on the contrary there is but too much cause to fear, that they are not at all sincerely and really desirous to be satisfied in the true State of Things, but only seek, under the pretense and cover of Infidelity, to excuse their Vices and Debaucheries ; which they are so strongly inflav'd to, that they cannot prevail with themselves upon any account to forsake them ; and yet a rational submitting to such Truths, as just Evidence and unanswerable Reason would induce them to believe, must necessarily make them uneasy under, and self-condemned in the practise of them. It remains therefore, I say, in order to finish the Design I proposed to my self, of establishing the Truth and Excellency of our Holy Religion, in opposition

position to all such vain pretenders to Reason as these ; that I proceed at this time, by a continuation of the same method of arguing, by which I before demonstrated the Being and Attributes of God, to prove distinctly the following Propositions.

I. *That* the same necessary and eternal *different Relations*, that different Things bear one to another ; and the same consequent *Fitness or Unfitness* of the Application of different Things or different Relations one to another ; with regard to which, the Will of God always and necessarily *does* determine it self to choose to act only what is agreeable to Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth, in order to the Welfare of the whole Universe ; *ought* likewise constantly to determine the Wills of all subordinate rational Beings, to govern all their Actions by the same Rules, for the good of the Publick in their respective Stations : That is, these eternal and necessary differences of Things, make it *fit and reasonable* for Creatures so to act ; they cause it to be their *Duty*, or lay an *Obligation* upon them, so to do ; even separate from the consideration of these Rules being the *positive Will*

*or Command of God ; and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal Advantage or Disadvantage, Reward or Punishment, either present or future, annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the practising or neglecting those Rules.*

II. *That* though these eternal moral Obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational Beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive Will and Command of God ; yet that which most strongly confirms, and in practise most effectually and indispensably inforces them upon us, is this ; that both from the Nature of Things, and Perfections of God, and from several other collateral considerations, it appears, that as God is himself necessarily Just and Good in the exercise of his infinite Power in the Government of the whole World, so he cannot but likewise positively *Require* the same of all his rational Creatures in the exercise of each of their Powers in their several and respective Spheres : That is ; as these eternal moral Obligations are really in perpetual Force, merely from their own Nature and the abstract



abstract Reason of Things; so also they are moreover the express and unalterable *Will, Command and Law of God* to his Creatures, which he cannot but expect should in Obedience to his Supreme Authority, as well as in compliance with the natural Reason of Things, be regularly and constantly observed through the whole Creation.

III. *That* therefore, though these eternal moral Obligations, are also incumbent indeed on all rational Creatures, antecedent to any respect of particular Reward or Punishment; yet they must certainly and necessarily be attended with *Rewards and Punishments*; Because the same Reasons, which prove God himself to be necessarily Just and Good; and the Rules of Justice, Equity and Goodness, to be his unalterable Will, Law and Command, to all created Beings; prove also that he cannot but *be pleased with and approve* such Creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those Rules, and *be displeased* with such as act contrary thereto; and consequently cannot but some way or other make a *suitable Difference* in his Dealings with them; and manifest his Supreme Power and absolute Authority,

in finally supporting, maintaining, and vindicating effectually the Honour of these his Divine Laws ; as becomes the Just and Righteous Governour and Disposer of all things.

IV. *That* consequently, though in order to establish this suitable difference between the Fruits or Effects of Virtue and Vice, so reasonable in it self, and so absolutely necessary for the Vindication of the Honour of God ; the Nature of things, and the Constitution and Order of God's Creation, was originally such, that the observance of the eternal Rules of Justice, Equity and Goodness, does indeed of it self tend by direct and natural consequence to make all Creatures happy ; and the contrary practise, to make them miserable : Yet since through some great and general Corruption and Depravation (whencesoever *That* may have arisen, the particular Original whereof could hardly have been known *Now* without Revelation,) the condition of Men in this present State is such, that the natural order of Things in this World is in event manifestly perverted, and Virtue and Goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due Effects in

esta.

## *and Revealed Religion.*

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establiſhing Mens Happineſs proportionable to their behaviour and praſtiſe ; Therefore it is abſolutely impoſſible, that the whole view and intention, the original and the final Deſign, of Gods creating ſuch rational Beings as Men are, and placing them in this Globe of Earth, as the chief and principal, or indeed (may we not ſay) the only Inhabitants, for whoſe ſake alone This part at leaſt of the Creation is manifeſtly fitted up and accommodated ; It is abſolutely impoſſible, I ſay, that the whole of Gods Deſign in all this, ſhould be nothing more than to keep up eternally a ſucceſſion of ſuch ſhort-lived Generations of Men, as at preſent Are ; and thoſe in ſuch a corrupt, confuſed, and diſorderly State of Things, as we ſee the World is now in ; without any due obſervation of the eternal Rules of Good and Evil, without any clear and remarkable Effect of the great and moſt neceſſary Differences of Things, and without any final vindication of the Honour and Laws of God in the proportionable reward of the beſt, or puniſhment of the worſt of Men : And conſequently it is certain and neceſſary, (even as certain as the  
moral



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moral Attributes of God before demonstrated,) that instead of continuing an eternal succession of new Generations in the present Form and State of Things, there must at some time or other be such a Revolution and Renovation of Things, or such a *future State* of existence of the same Persons, as that by an exact distribution of Rewards and Punishments therein, all the present Disorders and Inequalities may be set right; and the whole Scheme of Providence, which to us who judge of it by only one small Portion of it, seems now so inexplicable and much confused; shall appear at its consummation, to be a Design worthy of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness.

V. *That*, though the indispensable necessity of all the great and moral Obligations of Natural Religion, and also the Certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, be thus in general deducible even demonstrably, by a Chain of clear and undeniable reasoning: Yet (in the present State of the World, by what means soever it came originally to be so corrupted, of which more hereafter,) such is the *Carelessness, Inconsiderateness, and Want of Attention* of the greater part of  
of

of Mankind ; so many the *Prejudices* and *false Notions* imbibed by evil Education ; so strong and violent the unreasonable *Lusts*, *Appetites* and *Desires* of Sense ; and so great the *Blindness*, introduced by *Superstitious Opinions*, *vitious Customs*, and *debauched Practices* through the World ; that very few are able, in reality and effect, to discover these Things clearly and plainly for themselves ; but Men have great need of particular *Teaching*, and much *Instruction* to convince them of the *Truth*, and *Certainty*, and *Importance* of these things ; to give them a due *Sense*, and clear and just *Apprehensions* concerning them ; and to bring them effectually to the *practise* of the plainest and most necessary Duties.

VI. *That*, though in almost every Age there have indeed been in the Heathen World some wise and brave and good Men, who have made it their business to study and practise these things themselves, and to teach and exhort others to do the like ; who seem therefore to have been raised up by Providence, as Instruments to reprove in some measure and put some kind of check to the extreme Superstition and Wickedness of  
the

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the Nations wherein they lived : Yet none of these have ever been able to reform the World, with any considerably great and universal Success ; Because they have been but very *few*, that have in earnest set themselves about this excellent Work ; and they that have indeed sincerely done it, have themselves been intirely *ignorant* of some Doctrines, and very *doubtful and uncertain* of others, absolutely necessary for the bringing about that great End ; and those things which they have been certain of and in good measure understood, they have not been able to *prove and explain clearly* enough ; and those that they have been able both to prove and explain by sufficiently clear reasoning, they have not yet had *Authority* enough to inforce and inculcate upon Mens minds with so strong an impression, as to influence and govern the general practise of the World.

VII. *That* therefore there was plainly wanting a *Divine Revelation*, to recover Mankind out of their universally degenerate Estate, into a State suitable to the original Excellency of their Nature : Which Divine Revelation, both the Necessities of Men and their natural Notions

ons



ons of God, gave them reasonable ground to expect and hope for ; As appears from the Acknowledgments which the best and wisest of the Heathen Philosophers themselves have made, of their *Sense* of the necessity and want of such a Revelation ; and the Expressions they have given, of their *Hopes* that God would sometime or other vouchsafe it unto them.

VIII. *That there is no other Religion now in the World, but the Christian, that has any just pretense or tolerable appearance of Reason, to be esteemed such a Divine Revelation: And therefore if Christianity be not true, there neither is nor ever was any Revelation of the Will of God at all made to Mankind.*

IX. *That the Christian Religion, considered in its primitive Simplicity, and as taught in the Holy Scriptures, has all the Marks and Proofs of its being actually and truly a Divine Revelation ; that any Divine Revelation, supposing it was true, could reasonably be imagined or desired to have.*

X. *That the Practical Duties which the Christian Religion enjoins, are all such, as are most agreeable to our natural Notions of God, and most perfective*

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ative of the Nature, and conducive to the Happiness and Well-being of Men: That is, Christianity even in this single respect, as containing alone and in one consistent System all the Wise and good Precepts, (and those improved, augmented, and exalted to the highest degree of Perfection,) that ever were taught singly and scatteredly, and many times but very corruptly, by the several Schools of the Philosophers; and this without any mixture of the fond, absurd, and superstitious Practices of any of those Philosophers; ought to be embraced and practised by all rational and considering Deists, who will act consistently, and steddily pursue the consequences of their own Principles; as at least the best Scheme and Sect of Philosophy, that ever was set up in the World; and highly probable, even though it had no external evidence, to be of Divine Original.

XI. *That the Motives*, by which the Christian Religion inforces the practise of these Duties; are such as are most suitable to the excellent Wisdom of God, and most answerable to the natural Expectations of Men.

XII. *That*

XII. *That* the peculiar *Manner and Circumstances*, with which it enjoyns these Duties, and urges these Motives ; are exactly consonant to the Dictates of sound Reason, or the unprejudiced Light of Nature ; and most wisely perfective of it.

XIII. *That* all the [*Credenda*, or] *Doctrines*, which the true, simple, and uncorrupted Christian Religion requires our particular assent to, or firm belief of, as either being themselves of necessity to eternal Salvation, or closely connected with such as are so ; are, though indeed many of them not discoverable by bare Reason unassisted with Revelation, yet, when discovered by Revelation, apparently most agreeable to sound unprejudiced Reason ; have every one of them a natural *tendency*, and a direct and powerful *influence*, to reform Mens Lives and correct their Manners ; and do together make up an infinitely more consistent and rational Scheme of Belief, than any that the wisest of the antient Philosophers ever *did*, or the cunningest of the modern Unbelievers can invent or contrive.

XIV. *That* as this Revelation, to the judgment of right and sober Reason, appears



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appears even of it self highly credible and probable ; and abundantly recommends it self in its native Simplicity, merely by its own intrinſick Goodneſs and Excellency, to the practice of the moſt rational and conſidering Men, who are deſirous in all their Actions to have ſatisfaction and comfort, and good hope within themſelves, from the Conſcience of what they do : So it is moreover poſitively and directly proved, to be actually and immediately ſent to us from God ; *by the many infallible Signs and Miracles*, which the Author of it worked publickly as the Evidence of his Divine Commiſſion ; *by the exact completion both of the Prophecies* that went before concerning him, and of thoſe that He himſelf delivered concerning things that were to happen after ; and *by the Teſtimony* of his Followers ; which in all its Circumſtances was the moſt credible, certain, and convincing Evidence, that was ever given to any Matter of Fact in the World.

XV. And Laſtly ; *That* they who will not, by ſuch Arguments and Proofs as theſe, be convinced of the Truth and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion, and be perſwaded to make it the Rule  
and

and Guide of all their Actions ; *would not be convinced*, (so far as to influence their Hearts, and reform their Lives,) by *any other Evidence* whatsoever ; no, not tho' One should rise on purpose from the dead, to endeavour to convince them.

I might here, before I enter on the particular Proof of these several Propositions, justly be allowed to premise, that having *Now* to deal with *another sort* of Men, than those against whom my former Discourse was directed ; and being consequently in some parts of this Treatise to make use of some *other kinds* of Arguments, than those which the Nature of that Discourse permitted and required ; the same *demonstrative* force of reasoning, and even *Mathematical* certainty, which in the main Argument was there easy to be obtained, ought not here to be expected ; but that such *moral* Evidence, or mixt Proofs from Circumstances and Testimony, as most Matters of Fact are only capable of, and wise and honest Men are always satisfied with, ought to be accounted sufficient in the present Case. Because all the Principles indeed, upon which *Atheists* attempt to build *their* Schemes, are

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such

*of the several sorts of Deists.*

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such as may by plain force of Reason, and undeniably demonstrative Argumentation, be reduced to express and direct Contradictions. But the *Deists* pretend to own all the Principles of Reason, and would be thought to deny nothing but what depends entirely on Testimony and Evidence of matter of Fact, which they think they can easily evade.

But, if we examine things to the bottom, we shall find that the matter does not in reality lie here. For I believe there are not in the World, at least not in any part of the World where the Christian Religion is in any tolerable Purity professed, any such *Deists* as will truly stand to all the Principles of unprejudiced Reason, and sincerely both in profession and practise own all the Obligations of Natural Religion, and yet oppose Christianity merely upon account of their not being satisfied with the strength of the Evidence of *matter of Fact*. A constant and sincere observance of all the Laws of Reason and Obligations of Natural Religion, will unavoidably lead a Man to *Christianity*; if he has due opportunities of examining things, and will steddily pursue the Consequences of his own Principles: And all others, who pretend  
to



to be Deists without coming up to this, can have no fixt and settled Principles at all, upon which they can either argue or act consistently ; but must of necessity sink into *downright Atheism*, (and consequently fall under the force of the former Arguments ;) as may appear by considering the *several Sorts* of them.

I. Some Men would be thought to be *Deists*, because they pretend to believe the existence of an Eternal, Infinite, Independent, Intelligent Being ; and, to avoid the name of Epicurean Atheists, teach also that this Supreme Being made the World: Though at the same time they agree with the Epicureans in this, that they fancy \* God does *not at all concern* himself in the government of the World, nor has any regard to, or care of, what is done therein. But, if we examine things duly, this Opinion must unavoidably terminate in *absolute Atheism*. For although to imagine that God at the Creation of the World, or at the Formation of any particu-

*Of the first sort of Deists. And of Providence.*

\* Omnis enim per se Divum  
natura necesse est  
Immortali ævo summa cum  
pace fruatur,  
Semota a nostris rebus, se-  
junctaq; longe.  
Nam privata dolore omni,  
privata periclis,  
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, ni-  
hil indiga nostri,  
Nec bene promeritis capitur,  
nec tangitur ira.

*Lucret. lib. 1.*

Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον, ἔτε  
αὐτὸ πρῶτα ἔχει, ἔτε  
ἄλλω παρέχει ὥστε ἔτε ὀρ-  
γαῖς, ἔτε χρεῖσι συνέχεαι.  
*Laert. in vita Epicuri.*

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lar part of it, could (if he had pleased,) by his infinite Wisdom, Foresight, and unerring Design, have originally so ordered, disposed, and adapted all the Springs and Series of future *necessary and unintelligent* Causes, that without the immediate interposition of his Almighty Power upon every particular occasion, they should regularly by Virtue of that original Disposition have produc'd Effects worthy to proceed from the direction and government of infinite Wisdom: Though this, I say, may possibly by very nice and abstract reasoning be reconcileable with a firm Belief both of the Being and Attributes of God, and also with a consistent Notion even of *Providence* it self; Yet to fancy that God originally created a *certain Quantity of Matter and Motion*, and left them to frame a World at adventures, without any determinate and particular view, design or direction; this can no way be defended consistently, but must of necessity recur to *downright Atheism*: As I shall shew presently; after I have made only this One Observation, that as that Opinion is impious in it self, so the late improvements in Mathematicks and natural Philosophy have discovered, that, as things

Now

Now are, that Scheme is plainly false and impossible in Fact. For, not to say, that, seeing matter is utterly incapable of obeying any Laws, the very original Laws of Motion themselves cannot continue to take place, but by something superiour to Matter continually exerting on it a certain Force or Power according to such certain and determinate Laws; 'tis now evident beyond question, that the Bodies of all Plants and Animals, much the most considerable parts of the World, could not possibly have been formed by mere Matter according to any general Laws of Motion. And not only so; but That most universal Principle of Gravitation it self, the Spring of almost all the great and regular inanimate Motions in the World, answering, (as I hinted in my former Discourse) not at all to the Surfaces of Bodies, by which alone They can act one upon another, but entirely to their Solid content; cannot possibly be the result of any Motion originally impressed on Matter, but must of necessity be caused by something which penetrates the very solid Substance of all Bodies, and continually puts forth in them a Force or Power entirely different from that by

C 3

which



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which Matter acts on Matter. Which is by the by, an evident demonstration, not only of the World's being *made originally* by a Supreme Intelligent Cause ; but moreover that it Depends every Moment on some Superiour Being, for the *Preservation* of its Frame ; and that all the great Motions in it, are caused by some Immaterial Power, not having originally impressed a *certain Quantity of Motion* upon Matter, but perpetually and actually exerting it self every Moment in every part of the World. Which *Preserving and Governing Power*, whether it be immediately the Power and Action of the same Supreme Cause that created the World, or of some subordinate Instruments appointed by Him to direct and preside respectively over certain parts thereof, does either way equally give us a very noble Idea of *Providence*. Those Men indeed, who merely through a certain vanity of Philosophizing have been tempted to embrace that other Opinion, of all things being produced and continued only by a *certain Quantity of Motion*, originally impressed on *Matter* without any determinate design or direction, and left to it self to form a World at adventures ; Those Men, I say, who merely  
through

through a vanity of Philosophizing have been tempted to embrace that Opinion, without attending whither it would lead them; ought not, indeed, to be directly charged with all the Consequences of it: But 'tis certain that many under that cover, have really been Atheists; and the Opinion it self (as I before said) leads necessarily and by unavoidable consequence, to *plain Atheism*. For if God be an All-powerful, Omnipresent, Intelligent, Wise, and Free Being, (as it hath been before demonstrated that he necessarily Is;) he cannot possibly but *know* at all times and in all places every thing that *is*, and *foreknow* what at all times and in all places it is fittest and wisest *should be*, and have perfect *Power* without the least labour, difficulty or opposition, to *order and bring to pass* what he so judges fit to be accomplished; And consequently it is impossible but \* he must actually direct and appoint every particular thing and circumstance that is in the World or ever shall be, excepting only what by his own good pleasure he puts under the power and choice of subordinate Free Agents. If therefore God does not

\* Quo concesso, confitendum est eorum consilio mundum administrari. Cic. de nat. Deor. lib. 2.

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concern himself in the Government of the World, nor has any regard to what is done therein; it will follow that he is not an Omnipresent, All-powerful, Intelligent and Wise Being; and consequently, that he is not at all. Wherefore the Opinion of this sort of Deists, stands not upon any certain consistent Principles, but leads unavoidably to

*downright Atheism*; And

† *Epicurum verbis reli-*  
*quisse Deos, re sustulisse.*  
*Cic. de nat. Deor. lib. 2.*

† however in *Words* they may confess a God, yet in *reality* and in truth they deny him.

*Humane*  
*Affairs, not*  
*beneath the*  
*regard of*  
*Providence*

If to avoid this, they will own God's Government and Providence over the *greater and more considerable* parts of the World, but deny his Inspection and Re-

gard to *humane Affairs here upon Earth,*

as being \* too *minute and small* for the Supreme Go-

vernour of all things to concern himself in; This still amounts to the same.

For if God be Omnipresent, All-knowing, and All-powerful; he cannot but equally know, and with equal ease be able to direct and govern,

\* Εἰσὶ γάρ πινες οἱ νομίζοντες ὅτι τὰ θεῶν, καὶ τοιαῦτα διαφέρει ὁ λόγος· αὐτὰ δὲ ἐψήφηνεν ἀγαθὰ, καὶ δυνάμειν ἐχούσα ἢ ἀκροατῶν, καὶ γινώσκον ἢ τελειοτάτῳ ἢ ἡμέτεροι ἀνθρώπων καταφρονεῖν, ὡς μικρῶν καὶ ἐντελῶν ὄντων, καὶ ἀναξίων ἢ ἑαυτῶν ἐπιμελείας. *Simplic. in Epictet.*

† *all*



† *all* things as *any*, and the  
\* *minutest* things as the  
*greatest* : So that if he has  
no regard nor concern, for  
these things ; his Attri-  
butes must, as before, be  
denied ; and consequently  
his Being. But besides :

*Humane Affairs* are by no  
means the minutest and  
most inconsiderable part of  
the Creation : For, not to  
consider now that Excel-  
lency of Humane Nature,  
which Christianity disco-  
vers to us ; let a Deist sup-  
pose the Universe as large,  
as the widest Hypothesis of  
Astronomy will give him

leave to imagine ; or let him suppose it  
as immense as he himself pleases, and  
filled with as great numbers of rational  
Creatures as his own Fancy can suggest ;  
Yet the *System* wherein we are placed,  
will, at least for ought he can reasona-  
bly suppose, be as considerable as any  
other single *System* ; And the *Earth*  
whereon we dwell, as considerable as  
most of the other *Planets* in this *System* ;  
And *Mankind* manifestly the only con-  
siderable

† Deorum providentia  
mundus administratur ; ii-  
demq; consulunt rebus hu-  
manis ; neq; solum universis,  
verum etiam Singulis. Cic.  
de Divinat. lib. I.

\* Ἄλλ' ἔθεν τάχ' ἀνίστως  
εἴη χαλεπὸν ἐνδείξασθαι τῆ-  
τότε, ὡς ἐπιμελεῖς σμικρῶν  
εἶσι θεοί, ἐκ ἥτων ἢ τῆς με-  
γέτης διαφερόντων. Plato  
de Leg. lib. 10.

Εἰ γὰρ ὅλε κόσμος ὁ θεός  
ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀνάγκη καὶ τῶν  
μερῶν αὐτοῦ περνοεῖν, ὥσπερ  
καὶ αἱ τέχναι ποιεῖσι. Καὶ γὰρ  
ἰατροὶ τὰ ὅλα σώματα ἐπι-  
μελεῖσθαι προθέμενοι, ἐκ  
ἀν ἀμελήσειε τῶν μερῶν. ἔδ' ἔ-  
σεται τῶν, ἐδ' οἰκονόμοι, ἢ  
πολιτικὸς ἀνὴρ. τῶν γὰρ με-  
ρῶν ἀμελεμενῶν, ἀνάγκη  
χειρῶς τὸ ὅλον διαπιδε-  
σθαι. Simplic. in Epictet.

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siderable Inhabitants on this Globe of Earth. *Man* therefore has manifestly a better claim to the particular regard and concern of Providence, than any thing else in this *Globe* of ours ; And *this our Globe of Earth*, as just a pretense to it, as most other Planets in the System ; And *this System*, as just an one, as far as we can judge, as any System in the Universe. If therefore there be any Providence at all, and God has any concern for any part of the World ; *Mankind*, even separate from the consideration of that Excellency of Humane Nature which the Christian Doctrin discovers to us, may as reasonably be supposed to be under its particular care and government, as any other part of the Universe.

*Of the second sort of Deists.*

2. Some others there are, that call themselves *Deists*, because they believe, not only the Being, but also the Providence of God ; that is, that every *natural* thing that is done in the World, is produc'd by the Power, appointed by the Wisdom, and directed by the Government of God ; Though, not allowing any difference between *moral good and evil*, they suppose that God takes no notice of the morally good or evil Actions

Actions of Men ; these things depending, as they imagine, merely on the arbitrary constitution of Humane Laws. But how handsomely soever these Men may *seem* to speak, of the *natural Attributes* of God, of his Knowledge, Wisdom and Power ; yet neither can this Opinion be settled on any certain Principles, nor defended by any consistent reasoning ; nor can the *natural Attributes* of God be so separated from the *moral*, but that he who denies the latter, may be reduced to a necessity of denying the former likewise. For since (as I have formerly proved,) there cannot but be eternal and necessary Differences of different things one from another ; and from these necessary Differences of things, there cannot but arise a Fitness or Unfitness of the Application of different Things or different Relations one to another ; and infinite Knowledge can no more fail to Know, or infinite Wisdom to Choose, or infinite Power to Act according to, these eternal Reasons and Proportions of things, than Knowledge can be Ignorance, Wisdom be Folly, or Power Weakness ; and consequently the Justice and Goodness of God, are as certain



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tain and necessary, as his Wisdom and Power : It follows unavoidably, that he who denies the Justice or Goodness of God, or which is all one, denies his exercise of these Attributes in inspecting and regarding the moral Actions of Men ; must also deny, either his Wisdom, or his Power, or both ; and consequently must needs be driven into *absolute Atheism*. For though in some moral Matters, Men are not indeed to be judged of by the Consequences of their Opinions, but by their Profession and Practise ; yet in the present case

\* Quasi ego id curem,  
quid ille aiataut neget : Illud  
quæro, quid ei consentaneum  
sit dicere, qui &c. Cic. de  
Finib. lib. 2.

it \* matters not at all what Men affirm, or how honourably they may seem to speak of some particular Attributes of God ;

but what, notwithstanding such Profession, must needs in all reason be supposed to be their true Opinion ; and their *Practise* appears answerable to it.

*Profane  
and debauched De-  
ists, not capa-  
ble of being argued  
with.*

For concerning *these two* sorts of Deists, it is observable, that as their Opinions can terminate consistently in nothing but *down-right Atheism* ; so their *Practise and Behaviour* is exactly agreeable to that of the most openly professed *Atheists*. They not only oppose  
the

## *and Revealed Religion.* 29

the *Revelation* of Christianity, and reject all the *moral* Obligations of natural Religion, as such ; but generally they despise also the Wisdom of all *Humane Constitutions* made for the order and benefit of Mankind, and are as much contemners of *common decency* as they are of *Religion*. They endeavour to ridicule and banter all *Humane* as well as *Divine* Accomplishments ; all Virtue and Government of a Man's self, all Learning and Knowledge, all Wisdom and Honour, and every thing for which a *Man* can justly be commended or be esteemed more excellent than a *Beast*. They pretend commonly in their Discourse and Writings, to expose the Abuses and Corruptions of Religion ; but (as it is too manifest in some of their modern Books, as well as in their Talk,) they aim really against all Virtue in general, and all good Manners, and against whatsoever is truly valuable and commendable in Men. Of which a late Author has given us a very impious and profane Instance. They pretend to ridicule certain Vices and Follies of ignorant or superstitious Men ; but the many very profane and very lewd Images, with which they industriously affect

*Tale of a Tub.*

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affect to dress up their Discourse, show plainly that they really do not so much intend to expose and deride any Vice or Folly, as on the contrary to foment and please the debauched and vicious Inclinations of Others as void of shame as Themselves. They discover clearly, that they have no Sense at all of the Dignity of Humane Nature, nor of the Superiority and Excellency of their Reason above even the meanest of the Brutes. They will sometimes in Words seem to magnify the Wisdom and other natural Attributes of God; but in reality, by ridiculing whatever bears any resemblance to it in Men, they show undeniably that they do not indeed believe there is any real difference in Things, or any true Excellency in one thing more than in another. By turning every thing alike, and without exception, into ridicule and mockery; they declare plainly, that they don't believe any thing to be wise, any thing decent, any thing comely or praise-worthy at all. They seem not to have any esteem or value, for those distinguishing Powers and Faculties; by induing them wherewith, God has *taught them more than the Beasts of the Field, and made them*



them wiser than the Fowls of Heaven. In a word: Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise; these things they make the constant Subject of their mockery and abuse, ridicule and raillery. On the contrary; whatsoever things are profane, impure, filthy, dishonourable and absurd; these things they make it their business to represent as harmless and indifferent, and to laugh Men out of their natural shame and abhorrence of them; nay, even to recommend them with their utmost Wit. Such Men as these are not to be argued with, till they can be persuaded to use *Arguments* instead of *Drollery*. For *Banter* is not capable of being answered by *Reason*: Not because it has any strength in it; but because it runs out of all the bounds of Reason and good Sense, by extravagantly joining together such Images, as have not in themselves any manner of similitude or connexion; by which means all things are alike easie to be rendred ridiculous, by being represented only in an absurd Dress. These Men therefore are first to be

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be convinc'd of the true Principles of *Reason*, before they can be disputed with ; and then they must of necessity either retreat into down-right *Atheism*, or be led by undeniable Reasoning to acknowledge and submit to the Obligations of *Morality*, and make open recantation of their profane abuse of God and Religion.

*Of the  
third sort  
of Deists.*

3. Another sort of *Deists* there are, who having right apprehensions concerning the *natural Attributes* of God, and his All-governing Providence ; seem also to have some Notion of his *moral Perfections* also : That is, as they believe him to be a Being infinitely Knowing, Powerful and Wise ; so they believe him to be also in some Sense a Being of infinite Justice, Goodness and Truth ; and that he governs the Universe by these Perfections, and expects suitable Obedience from all his rational Creatures. But then, having a prejudice against the Notion of the *Immortality of Humane Souls*, they believe that Men perish intirely at Death, and that one Generation shall perpetually succeed another, without any thing remaining of Men after their departure out of this Life, and without any future restoration

or

or renovation of things : And imagin-  
 ing that Justice and Goodness in God,  
 are not the same as in the Ideas we  
 frame of these Perfections when we con-  
 sider them in Men, or when we reason  
 about them abstractly in themselves ;  
 but that in the Supreme Governour of  
 the World they are Something *Transcen-*  
*dent*, and of which we cannot make a-  
 ny true Judgment, nor argue with any  
 certainty about them ; They fancy,  
 though there does not indeed seem to  
 Us to be any Equity or Proportion in  
 the distribution of Rewards and Punish-  
 ments in this present Life, yet that We  
 are not sufficient Judges concerning the  
 Attributes of God, to argue from thence  
 with any assurance for the certainty of  
 a future State. But neither does this  
 Opinion stand on any consistent Prin-  
 ciples. For if Justice and Goodness be  
 not \* the same in God, as  
 in our Ideas ; then we  
 mean nothing when we say  
 that God is necessarily  
 just and Good ; and for  
 the same reason it may as well be said ;  
 that we know not what we mean, when  
 we affirm that he is an Intelligent and  
 Wise Being ; and there will be no Foun-  
 D dation

\* Καθ' ἡμᾶς ὅς ἐστι αὐτὴ  
 ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ καὶ μαρτυροῦν πάν-  
 των ὥστε καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἀν-  
 θεώπια καὶ θεῶν. Orig. contr.  
 Cels. lib. 4.



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dation at all left, on which we can fix any thing. Thus the *moral Attributes* of God, however they be acknowledg'd in words, yet in reality they are by these Men entirely taken away ; and, upon the same grounds, the *natural Attributes* may also be denied. And, so upon the whole, this Opinion likewise, if we argue upon it consistently, must finally recur to absolute Atheism.

*Of the  
fourth sort  
of Deists.*

4. The last sort of *Deists* are those, who, if they did indeed believe what they *pretend*, have just and right Notions of God, and of all the Divine Attributes in every respect ; who declare they believe *that* there is One, Eternal, Infinite, Intelligent, All-powerful and Wise Being ; the Creator, Preserver, and Governour of all things ; *That* this Supreme Cause is a Being of infinite Justice, Goodness and Truth, and all other moral as well as natural Perfections ; *That* he made the World for the manifestation of his Power and Wisdom, and to communicate his Goodness and Happiness to his Creatures ; *That* he preserves it by his continual All-wise Providence, and governs it according to the Eternal Rules of Infinite Justice, Equity

Equity, Goodness, Mercy and Truth ;  
*That* all created rational Beings, depending continually upon him, are bound to adore, worship and obey him ; to praise him for all things they enjoy, and to pray to him for every thing they want ;  
*That* they are all obliged to promote, in their proportion, and according to the extent of their several powers and abilities, the general good and welfare of those parts of the World, wherein they are placed ; in like manner as the Divine Goodness is continually promoting the Universal Benefit of the Whole ;  
*That* Men in particular, are every one obliged to make it their business, by an universal Benevolence, to promote the Happiness of all others ; *That* in order to this, every Man is bound always to behave himself so towards Others, as in reason he would desire they should in like circumstances deal with Him ;  
*That* therefore, he is obliged to obey and submit to his Superiours in all just and right things, for the preservation of Society, and the peace and benefit of the Publick ; to be just and honest, equitable and sincere, in all his dealings with his Equals, for the keeping inviolable the everlasting Rule of Righteousness,

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ness, and maintaining an universal trust and confidence, friendship and affection amongst Men ; and towards his Inferiours, to be gentle and kind, easie and affable, charitable and willing to assist as many as stand in need of his help, for the Preservation of universal Love and Benevolence among Mankind, and in imitation of the Goodness of God, who preserves and does good to all Creatures, which depend intirely upon Him for their very being and all that they injoy ; *That*, in respect of Himself, every Man is bound to preserve, as much as in him lies, his own Being and the right use of all his Faculties, so long as it shall please God, who appointed him his Station in this World, to continue him therein ; *That* therefore he is bound to have an exact Government of his passions, and carefully to abstain from all Debaucheries and Abuses of himself, which tend either to the Destruction of his own Being, or to the disordering his Faculties, and disabling him from performing his Duty, or hurrying him into the practise of unreasonable and unjust things ; Lastly, *That* accordingly as Men regard or neglect these Obligations, so they are proportionably



portionably acceptable or displeasing unto God; who being Supreme Governor of the World, cannot but testify his favour or displeasure at some time or other; and consequently, since this is not done in the present State, therefore there must be a future State of Rewards and Punishments in a Life to come. *But* all this, the Men we are now speaking of, *pretend to believe* only so far, as it is discoverable by the Light of Nature alone; without believing any Divine Revelation. These, I say, are the only *true Deists*; and indeed the only Persons who ought in reason to be argued with, in order to convince them of the Reasonableness, Truth, and Certainty of the *Christian Revelation*. But alas, there is, as I \* before said, too \* *pag. 12.* much reason to believe, that there are very few or none *such Deists* as These, among our modern Deniers of Revelation. For such Men as I have now described, if they would at all attend to the Consequences of their own Principles, could not fail of being quickly persuaded to embrace *Christianity*. For, being fully convinced of the *Obligations of Natural Religion*, and the Certainty of a *future state of Rewards and Punishments*;

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and yet observing at the same time, how little Use Men generally are able to make of the Light of Reason, to discover the *one*, or to convince themselves effectually of the certainty and importance of the *other*; it is impossible but they must be sensible of the want of a Revelation; it is impossible but they must earnestly desire God would be pleased, by some immediate discovery of his Will, to make these things more *clear* and *plain* and *easie* and *obvious* and *certain* to all Capacities; it is impossible but they must wish, God would be pleased particularly to signify expressly the acceptableness of Repentance, and his willingness to forgive returning Sinners; it is impossible but they must be very solicitous, to have some more particular and certain information concerning the nature of that future State, which reason teaches them in general to expect. The Consequence of this, is; that they must needs be possessed before-hand with a strong Hope, that the Christian Revelation may upon due examination appear to be true; They must be infinitely far from ridiculing and despising any thing that pretends to be a Divine Revelation, before they have sincerely and thoroughly examined

examined it to the bottom ; They must needs be before-hand very much disposed in its favour ; and be very willing to be convinced, that what tends to the advancing and perfecting the Obligations of natural Religion, to the securing their great Hopes, and ascertaining the Truth of a future State of Rewards and Punishments ; and can any way be made appear to be worthy of God, and consistent with his Attributes ; and has but any reasonable Proof of the Matters of Fact it depends upon ; is really and truly, what it pretends to be, a *Divine Revelation*. And now is it possible, that any Man with these opinions and these dispositions, should continue to reject *Christianity*, when proposed to him in its original and genuine Simplicity, without the mixture of any corruptions or inventions of Men ? Let him read the Sermons and Exhortations of our Saviour, as delivered in the *Gospels* ; and the Discourses of the Apostles preserved in their *Acts* and their *Epistles* ; and try if he can withstand the evidence of such a Doctrine, and reject the hopes of such a glorious Immortality so discovered to him. The *Heathen Philosophers*, those few of them, who taught and

*That there  
is now no  
consistent  
Scheme of  
Deism in  
the World.*



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lived up to the Obligations of natural Religion, had indeed a consistent Scheme of Deism, so far as it went ; and they were very Brave and Wise Men, if any of them could keep steady and firm to it. But the Case is not so *Now*. The same Scheme of Deism is not any longer consistent to its own Principles, if it does not *Now* lead Men to embrace and *believe Revelation*, as it *Then* taught them to *hope* for it. *Deists*, in our Days, who obstinately reject Revelation when offered to them, are not such Men as *Socrates* and *Tully* were ; but, under pretense of Deism, 'tis plain they are generally Ridiculers of all that is truly excellent even in natural Religion it self. Could we see a Deist, whose Mind was heartily possess'd with worthy and just apprehensions of all the Attributes of God, and a deep Sense of his duty towards that Supreme Author and Preserver of his Being ; Could we see a Deist, who lived in an exact performance of all the Duties of natural Religion ; and by the practise of Righteousness, Justice, Equity, Sobriety and Temperance, expressed in his Actions, as well as Words, a firm belief and expectation of a future State of Rewards

Rewards and Punishments : In a word, Could we see a Deist, who with reverence and modesty, with sincerity and impartiality, with a true and hearty desire of finding out and submitting to Reason and Truth, would inquire into the Foundations of our belief, and examine throughly the pretensions which pure and uncorrupt Christianity has to be received as a Divine Revelation ; I think we could not doubt to affirm of such a Person, as our Saviour did of the young Man in the Gospel, that he was *not far from the Kingdom of God ;* and that, being *willing to do his Will, he should know of the Doctrine, whether it was of God.* But, as I have said, there is great reason to doubt, there are no such Deists as these, among the Infidels of our Days. This indeed is what they sometimes pretend, and seem to desire should be thought to be their Case : But alas, their trivial and vain Cavils ; their mocking and ridiculing, without and before examination ; their directing the whole stress of their Objections, against particular Customs, or particular and perhaps uncertain Opinions or Explications of Opinions, without at all considering the main Body of Religion ; their loose,  
vain,

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vain, and frothy Discourses; and above all, their vitious and immoral Lives; show plainly and undeniably, that they are not really *Deists*, but mere *Atheists*, and consequently not capable to judge of the Truth of Christianity. If they were truly and in earnest such *Deists* as they pretend and would sometimes be thought to be; those Principles (as has been already shown in part, and will more fully appear in the following Discourse;) would unavoidably lead them to *Christianity*: But, being such as they really are, they cannot possibly avoid recurring to down-right *Atheism*.

The Sum is this: There is now

\* Ita fit, ut si ab illa rerum Summa, quam superius comprehendimus, aberraveris; omnis ratio intereat, & ad nihilum omnia revertantur. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

\* no such Thing, as a consistent Scheme of Deism. That which alone was once such, namely the Scheme of the best *Heathen Philosophers*, ceases now to be so,

after the appearance of Revelation; Because (as I have already shown, and shall more largely prove in the sequel of this Discourse,) it directly conducts Men to the belief of *Christianity*. All other Pretenses to *Deism*, may by unavoidable consequence be forc'd to



to terminate in absolute *Atheism*. He that cannot prevail with himself to obey the *Christian Doctrine*, and embrace Those hopes of *life and immortality*, which our Saviour has brought to light through the Gospel; cannot Now be imagined to maintain with any firmness, steddiness and certainty, the belief of the *immortality of the Soul*, and a *future State of Rewards and Punishments* after death; Because all the main difficulties and objections, lie equally against both. For the same reason, he who disbelieves the immortality of the Soul, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments; cannot defend to any effectual purpose, or enforce with any sufficient strength, the *obligations of Morality and natural Religion*; notwithstanding that they are indeed incumbent upon Men, from the very nature and reason of the things themselves. Then he who gives up the obligations of Morality and natural Religion, cannot possibly have any just and worthy notion of the *moral Attributes* of God, or any true Sense of the nature and *necessary differences* of things: And he that once goes thus far, has no foundation left, upon which he can be sure of the *natural*

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*ral Attributes* or even of the *Existence* of God ; Because to deny what unavoidably follows from the Supposition of his Existence and natural Attributes, is in reality denying those natural Attributes and that Existence it self. On the contrary : He who believes the *Being* and *natural Attributes* of God, must of necessity (as has been shown in my former Discourse) confess his *moral Attributes* also. Next, he who owns and has just notions of the moral Attributes of God, cannot avoid acknowledging the *obligations of Morality and natural Religion*. In like manner, he who owns the obligations of Morality and natural Religion, must needs, to support those obligations and make them effectual in practise, believe a *future State of Rewards and Punishments* : And finally, he who believes both the obligations of natural Religion, and the certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments ; has no manner of reason left, why he should reject the *Christian Revelation*, when proposed to him in its original and genuine Simplicity. Wherefore since those Arguments which demonstrate to us the Being and Attributes of God, are so closely connected with those which prove

prove the reasonableness and certainty of the Christian Revelation, that there is Now no consistent Scheme of Deism left ; all modern Deists being forced to shift from one Cavil to another, and having no fixt and certain set of Principles to adhere to ; I thought I could no way better prevent their evil Designs, and obviate all their different Shifts and Objections ; than, by pursuing the same method of reasoning, by which I before demonstrated the *Being and Attributes of God*, to endeavour to prove in like manner, by one direct and continued thread of Arguing, the reasonableness and certainty of the *Christian Revelation* also.

To proceed therefore to the proof of the *Propositions* themselves.

I. *The same necessary and eternal different Relations, that different Things bear one to another ; and the same consequent Fitness or Unfitness of the Application of different things or different relations one to another ; with regard to which, the Will of God always and necessarily does determine it self, to choose to act only what is agreeable to Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth, in order to the Welfare of the whole*



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*whole Universe ; ought likewise constantly to determine the Wills of all subordinate rational Beings, to govern all their Actions by the same Rules, for the good of the Publick, in their respective Stations : That is, these eternal and necessary differences of things, make it fit and reasonable for Creatures so to act ; they cause it to be their Duty, or lay an Obligation upon them, so to do ; even separate from the consideration of these Rules being the positive Will or Command of God ; and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal Advantage or Disadvantage, Reward or Punishment, either present or future ; annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the practising or neglecting those Rules.*

The several Parts of this Proposition may be proved distinctly, in the following manner.

*That there are eternal and necessary differences of things.*      I. That there are Differences of things ; and *different Relations, Respects or Proportions*, of some things towards others ; is as evident and undeniable, as that one *magnitude or number*, is greater, equal to, or smaller than another. That from these *different relations* of

of different things, there necessarily arises an *agreement* or *disagreement* of some things with others, or a *fitness* or *unfitness* of the application of different things or different relations one to another ; is likewise as plain, as that there is any such thing as *Proportion* or *Disproportion* in *Geometry* and *Arithmetick*, or *Uniformity* or *Difformity* in comparing together the *Quantities* and *Figures* of *Bodies*. Further, that there is a *Fitness* or *Suitableness* of certain *Circumstances* to certain *Persons*, and an *Unsuitableness* of others ; founded in the *nature* of *things*, and the *Qualifications* of *Persons* ; antecedent to all *positive* appointment whatsoever ; Also, that from the different relations of *different Persons one to another*, there necessarily arises a *fitness* or *unfitness* of certain *manners of behaviour* of some *Persons* towards others : is as manifest, as that the *Properties* which flow from the *Essences* of different *mathematical Figures*, have different *congruities* or *incongruities* between themselves ; or that in *Mechanicks*, certain *Weights* or *Powers* have very different *Forces*, and different *Effects* one upon Another, according to their different *Distances*, or different *Positions* and *Situations*

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*Situations* in respect of each other. For instance : That *God* is infinitely superiour to *Men* ; is as clear, as that *Infinity* is larger than a *Point*, or *Eternity* longer than a *Moment* : And it is as certainly *Fit*, that *Men* should honour and worship, obey and imitate *God*, rather than on the contrary in all their Actions indeavour to dishonour and disobey him ; as it is certainly *True*, that *they* have an entire dependence on *Him*, and *He* on the contrary can in no respect receive any advantage from *them* ; and not only so, but also that his Will is as certainly and unalterably *just and equitable* in giving his Commands, as his Power is *irresistible* in requiring submission to it. Again ; it is a thing absolutely and necessarily *Fitter* in it self, that the Supreme Author and Creator of the Universe, should govern, order, and direct all things to certain constant and *regular Ends* ; than that every thing should be permitted to go on at Adventures, and produce uncertain Effects merely *by chance* and in the utmost *confusion*, without any determinate View or Design at all. It is a thing manifestly *Fitter* in it self, that the All-powerful Governour of the World, should do  
always



always what is *Best* in the whole, and what tends most to the universal *Good* of the whole Creation; than that he should make the whole continually *miserable*; or than that to satisfy the unreasonable desires of any particular depraved Natures, he should at any time suffer the Order of the whole to be *altered* and *perverted*. Lastly, it is a thing evidently and infinitely more *Fit*, that any one particular *innocent and good Being*, should by the Supreme Ruler and Disposer of all things, be placed and preserved in an *easy and happy Estate*; than that without any fault or demerit of its own, it should be made *extremely, remedilessly, and endlessly miserable*. In like manner; in *Mens* dealing and conversing one with another; it is undeniably more *Fit*, absolutely and in the Nature of the thing it self, that all Men should endeavour to promote the *universal good and welfare of All*; than that all Men should be continually contriving the *ruin and destruction* of *All*. It is evidently more *Fit*, even before all positive Bargains and Compacts, that Men should deal one with another according to the known Rules of *Justice and Equity*; than that every Man for his own present

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sent advantage, should without scruple disappoint the most *reasonable and equitable Expectations* of his Neighbours, and *cheat and defraud*, or *spoil by violence*, all others without restraint. Lastly, it is without dispute more *Fit* and reasonable in it self, that I should *preserve the Life* of an innocent Man that happens at any time to be in my Power; or deliver him from any imminent danger, tho' I have never made any promise to do so; than that I should suffer him to perish, or *take away his Life*, without any reason or provocation at all.

*The absurdity of those who deny the eternal and necessary differences of things.*

These things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremest stupidity of Mind, corruption of Manners, or perverseness of Spirit, can possibly make any Man entertain the least doubt concerning them. For a Man endued with *Reason*, to deny the Truth of these things; is the very same thing, as if a Man that has the use of his *Sight*, should at the same time that he beholds the *Sun*, deny that there is any such thing as *Light* in the World; or as if a Man that understands *Geometry* or *Arithmetick*, should deny the most obvious and known *Proportions* of *Lines* or *Numbers*, and perversely contend that the *Whole* is not *equal to all*

all its parts, or that a *Square* is not double to a *Triangle* of equal base and height. Any Man of ordinary capacity, and unbiassed judgment, plainness and simplicity; who had never read, and had never been told, that there were Men and Philosophers, who had in earnest asserted and attempted to prove, that there is no natural and unalterable difference between *Good* and *Evil*; would at the first hearing be as hardly perswaded to believe, that it could ever really enter into the Heart of any Intelligent Man, to deny all natural difference betwixt *Right* and *Wrong*; as he would be to believe, that ever there could be any *Geometer* who would seriously and in good earnest lay it down as a first Principle, that a *crooked Line* is as *strait* as a *right* one. So that indeed it might justly seem altogether a needless undertaking, to attempt to prove and establish the *eternal difference* of *Good* and *Evil*; had there not appeared certain Men, as Mr *Hobbs* and some few others, who have presumed, contrary to the plainest and most obvious reason of Mankind, to assert, and not without some Subtilty in-deavoured to prove, that there is no such real Difference *originally, necessarily*



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*ly* and *absolutely* in the Nature of Things; but that all Obligation of *Duty to God*, arises merely from his absolute *irresistible Power*; and all *Duty towards Men*, merely from *positive Compact*; And have founded their whole Scheme of Politicks upon that Opinion. Wherein as they have contradicted the judgment of all the wisest and soberest part of Mankind, so they have not been able to avoid contradicting themselves also. For (not to mention now, that they have no way to show how *Compacts* themselves come to be obligatory, but by inconsistently owning an eternal original *Fitness* in the thing it self; which I shall have occasion to observe hereafter;) if there be *naturally* and *absolutely* in things themselves, no difference betwixt *good* and *evil*, *just* and *unjust*; then in the State of Nature, before any Compact be made, it is equally as good, just and reasonable, for one Man to destroy the Life of another, not only when 'tis necessary for his own preservation, but also arbitrarily and without any \* provocation at all, or any appearance of advantage to himself; as to preserve or save another Man's Life, when he may do it without any hazard of his own. The consequence of which is, that not only the

\*See Hobbs  
de Cive c.  
3. § 4.

the first and most obvious way for every particular Man to secure himself effectually, would be (as Mr *Hobbs* teaches) to endeavour to prevent and cut off all others; but also that Men might destroy one another upon every foolish and peevish or arbitrary Humour, even when they did not think any such thing necessary for their own preservation. And the effect of this practise must needs be, that it would terminate in the destruction of all Mankind. Which being undeniably a great and unsufferable evil; Mr *Hobbs* himself confesses it reasonable, that, to prevent this evil, Men should enter into certain Compacts to preserve one another. Now if the destruction of Mankind by each others Hands, be such an evil, that, to prevent it, it was fit and reasonable that Men should enter into Compacts to preserve each other; then, before any such Compacts, it was manifestly a thing *unfit and unreasonable in it self*, that Mankind should all destroy one another. And if so, then for the same reason it was also *unfit and unreasonable*, antecedent to all Compacts, that *any one Man* should destroy another *arbitrarily* and without any provocation, or at any time when

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it was not *absolutely* and *immediately* necessary for the preservation of himself.

Which is directly contradictory to Mr *Hobbs's* first Supposition, of

\* Ex his sequitur injuriam  
nemini fieri posse, nisi ei  
quocum initur pactum. *de*  
*Cive* c. 3. § 4. *where see*  
*more to the same purpose.*

\* there being no natural  
and absolute difference be-  
twixt Good and Evil, Just  
and Unjust, antecedent to

positive Compact. And in like manner  
all others, who upon any pretense  
whatsoever, teach that Good and Evil  
depend originally on the Constitution of  
*positive Laws*, whether *Divine* or *Humane*;  
must unavoidably run into the same Ab-  
surdity. For if there be no such  
thing as Good and Evil in the Nature  
of Things, antecedent to all Laws; then  
neither can any one Law be better than  
another; nor any one thing whatever  
be more justly established and enforced  
by Laws, than the contrary; nor can

there † any reason be gi-  
ven, why any Laws should  
ever be made at all: But  
all Laws equally, will be  
either\* arbitrary and tyran-  
nical, or frivolous and need-  
less; because the contrary  
might with equal reason  
have been established, if,  
be-

† Manifestum est rationem  
nullam esse Lege prohibenti  
noxas tales, nisi agnoscunt  
tales Actus, etiam antece-  
denter ad ullam Legem,  
mala esse. *Cumberl. de Leg.*  
*Nat. pag. 194.*

\* Nam stoliditas inveniri  
quæ inanior potest, quam  
mala esse nulla contendere,  
& tanquam malos perdere &  
condemnare peccantes? *Ar-*  
*nob. advers. Gentes. Lib. 2.*



before the making of the Laws, all things had been alike indifferent in their own Nature. There is no possible way to avoid this Absurdity, but by saying, that out of things in their own Nature absolutely indifferent, those are chosen by wise Governours to be made obligatory by Law, the practise of which they judge will tend to the publick benefit of the Community. But this is an expresse contradiction in the very terms. For if the practise of certain things tends to the publick benefit of the World, and the contrary would tend to the publick disadvantage; then those things are not in their own nature indifferent, but were good and reasonable to be practised before any Law was made, and can only for that very reason be wisely enforced by the Authority of Laws. Only here it is to be observed, that by the publick Benefit must \* not be understood the interest of any *one* particular *Nation*, to the plain injury or prejudice of the rest of Mankind; any more than the Interest of *one* *City* or *Family*, in opposition to their Neighbours of the same Country: But those

\* Qui autem *Civium* rationem dicunt habendam, *Externorum* negant; dirimunt hi communem generis *humani* societatem; qua sublata, *justitia* funditus tollitur. *Cic. de Offic. Lib. 2.*

things only are truly good in their own nature, which either tend to the universal benefit and welfare of all Men, or at least are not destructive of it. The true State therefore of this Case, is plainly this: Some things are in their own nature *Good and Reasonable and Fit* to be done; such as *Keeping Faith, performing equitable Compacts*, and the like; And these receive not their obligatory power, from any Law or Authority; but are only declared, confirmed, and enforced by penalties, upon such as would not perhaps be governed by right reason only. Other things are in their own nature *absolutely Evil*; such as *Breaking Faith, refusing to perform equitable compacts, cruelly destroying those who have neither directly nor indirectly given any occasion for any such treatment*, and the like; And these cannot by any Law or Authority whatsoever, be made fit and reasonable or excuseable to be practised. Lastly, other things are in their own Nature *Indifferent*, that is, (not *absolutely and strictly* so; as such trivial Actions, which have no way any tendency at all either to the publick welfare or damage; For concerning such things it would be childish and trifling to suppose any Laws

to be made at all ; But) such things, whose tendency to the publick benefit or disadvantage, is either so *small*, or so *remote*, or so *obscure and involved*, that the generality of People are not able of themselves to discern on which side they ought to act ; And these things are made obligatory by the Authority of Laws. though perhaps every one cannot distinctly perceive the reason and fitness of their being enjoined : Of which sort are many particular *penal Laws*, in several Countries and Nations. But to proceed.

An Answer to the Objection drawn from the Variety of the Opinions of learned Men, and the Laws of different Nations, concerning right and wrong.

The principal thing that can, with any colour of reason, seem to countenance the Opinion of those who deny the natural and eternal difference of good and evil, (for Mr *Hobbs's* false Reasonings I shall hereafter consider by themselves ; ) is the *difficulty* there may sometimes be, to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong ; the *variety* \* of *Opinions* that have obtained even among understanding and learned Men concerning certain Questions of just and unjust, especially in political

Matters ; and the *many contrary Laws* that

\* Τὰ δὲ καλὰ καὶ τὰ δυνάμει καὶ ἐν ἡ πολιτικῇ σκοπεῖται, ποσάυτην ἔχει διαφορὰν καὶ πλάνην, ὥστε δοκεῖν νόμῳ εἶναι, φύσιν δὲ μὴ. *Aristot. Ethic. lib. 1. cap. 1.*



that have been made in divers Ages and in different Countries, concerning these Matters. But, as in *Painting*, though two very different Colours, by diluting each other very slowly and gradually, may from the highest intenseness in either extreme, terminate in the midst insensibly, and so run one into the other, that it shall not be possible even for a skilful Eye to determine exactly where the one ends and the other begins; and yet the Colours differ as much as can be, not in degree only, but entirely in kind, as red and blew, or white and black: So, though it may perhaps be very difficult in some nice and perplexed Cases (which yet are very far from occurring frequently,) to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong, just and unjust; and there may be some latitude in the judgment of different Men, and the Laws of divers Nations; Yet *Right* and *Wrong* are nevertheless in themselves totally and essentially different; even altogether as much, as *White* and *Black*, *Light* and *Darkness*.

\* Κλέπειν γενόμην τις  
ἐλδοθέρας παῖδας, π. π.  
δυναίτο. *Plutarch. Apophth.*  
*Lacon.*

The *Spartan Law* perhaps, which \* permitted their Youth to *Steal*; may, as absurd as it was, bear much

much dispute whether it was absolutely *Unjust* or no; because every Man having an absolute Right in his own Goods, it may seem that the Members of any Society may agree to transfer or alter their own Properties upon what conditions they shall think fit. But if it could be supposed that a Law had been made at *Sparta*; or at *Rome*, or in *India*, or in any other part of the World; whereby it had been commanded or allowed, that every Man might Rob by Violence, and *Murther* whomsoever he met with; or that *no Faith* should be kept with any Man, nor any *equitable Compacts* performed; No Man, with any tolerable use of his Reason, whatever diversity of Judgment might be among them in other things, would have thought that such a Law could have authorized or excused, much less have justified such Actions, and have made them become good: Because it is plainly not in Mens Power to make *Falshood* be *Truth*, tho' they may alter the *Property of their Goods* as they please. Now if in *flagrant Cases*, the natural and essential difference between good and evil, right and wrong, cannot but be confessed to be plainly and undeniably evident; the dif-

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difference betwixt them must be also essential and unalterable in all even the smallest and nicest and most intricate Cases, tho' it be not so easy to be discerned and accurately distinguished. For if from the difficulty of determining exactly the bounds of right and wrong in many *perplex*t cases, it could truly be concluded that Just and Unjust were not essentially different by Nature, but only by positive constitution and custom; it would follow equally, that they were not really, essentially, and unalterably different, even in the *most flagrant cases* that can be supposed. Which is an assertion so very absurd, that Mr *Hobbs* himself could hardly vent it without blushing, and discovering plainly by his shifting Expressions his secret self-condemnation. There are therefore certain *necessary and eternal differences* of things; and certain consequent *fitnesses or unfitnesses* of the application of different things or different relations one to another; not depending on any positive constitutions, but founded unchangeably in the nature and reason of things, and unavoidably arising from the differences of the things themselves. Which is the first Branch of the general Proposition I proposed to prove.

2. Now



2. Now What these eternal and un-  
alterable *Relations, Respects or Proporti-*  
*ons* of things, with their consequent  
*Agreements or Disagreements, Fitnesses*  
or *Unfitnesses*, absolutely and necessarily  
Are in themselves; That also they Ap-  
pear to be, to the *Understandings* of all  
Intelligent Beings; except those only,  
who *Understand* things to be what they  
are not, that is, whose *Understandings*  
are either very imperfect, or very much  
depraved. And by this Understanding  
or Knowledge of the natural and neces-  
sary relations, fitnesses, and proportions  
of things; the *Wills* likewise of all In-  
telligent Beings are constantly directed,  
and must needs be determined to act ac-  
cordingly; excepting those only, who  
*Will* things to be what they are not nor  
cannot be, that is, whose *Wills* are cor-  
rupted by particular Interest or Affec-  
tion, or swayed by some unreasonable  
and prevailing Passion. Wherefore since  
the *natural* Attributes of God, his infi-  
nite Knowledge, Wisdom, and Power,  
set *Him* infinitely above all possibility of  
being *deceived by any error*, or of be-  
ing *influenced by any wrong affection*; 'tis  
manifest *His* Divine Will cannot but al-  
ways and necessarily determine it self to  
choose

That the  
Will of God  
always de-  
termines it  
self to act  
according  
to the eter-  
nal reason  
of things.

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choose to Do what in the whole is absolutely Best and Fittest to be done; that is, to act constantly according to the eternal Rules of infinite Goodness, Justice and Truth. As I have intended to show distinctly in my former Discourse, in deducing severally the Moral Attributes of God.

*That all rational Creatures are obliged to govern themselves in all their Actions by the same eternal rule of Reason.*

3. And now, that the same *Reason of Things*, with regard to which the Will of God always and necessarily *Does* determine it self to act in constant conformity to the eternal Rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth; *ought* also constantly to determine the Wills of all Subordinate Rational Beings, to govern all *Their* Actions by the same Rules; is very evident. For, as it is absolutely *impossible in Nature*, that God should be *deceived by any error*, or *influenced by any wrong affection*: So it is very *unreasonable and blame-worthy in practise*, that any *Intelligent* Creatures, whom God has made so far like unto himself, as to endue them with those excellent Faculties of *Reason* and *Will*, whereby they are enabled to *distinguish* Good from Evil, and to chuse the one and refuse the other; should either *negligently* suffer themselves to be *imposed upon and de-*  
*ceived*

ceived in matters of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong; or wilfully and perversely allow themselves to be over-ruled by *absurd Passions* and *corrupt or partial Affections*, to Act contrary to what they Know is Fit to be done. Which two things, viz. *negligent Misunderstanding* or *wilful Passions and Lusts*, are, as I said, the only causes which can make a Reasonable Creature act contrary to Reason, that is, contrary to the eternal Rules of Justice, Equity, Righteousness and Truth. For, was it not for these inexcusable corruptions and depravations; 'tis impossible but those same Proportions and Fittests of things, which have so much Weight, and so much Excellency and Beauty in them, that the All-powerful Creator and Governour of the Universe, who has the absolute and uncontrollable Dominion of all things in his own Hands, and is accountable to None for what he does, yet thinks it no diminution of his Power to make this *Reason of Things* the unalterable Rule and Law of all his own actions in the government of the World, and does nothing by mere Will and Arbitrariness; 'tis impossible, I say, if it was not for inexcusable corruption and deprava-



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*Proved  
from the  
original  
Nature of  
things.*

depravation, but the same eternal *Reason of Things* must much more have Weight enough to determine constantly the Wills and Actions of all Subordinate, Finite, Dependent and Accountable Beings. For originally and in reality, it is as *natural* and (morally speaking) *necessary*, that the *Will* should be determined in every Action by the *Reason of the thing* and the *Right of the case*; as it is *natural* and (absolutely speaking) *necessary*, that the *Understanding* should submit to a *demonstrated Truth*. And it is as absurd and blame-worthy, to *mistake negligently* plain *Right* and *Wrong*, that is, to *Understand* the Proportions of things in Morality to be what they are not; or *wilfully to act contrary* to known Justice and Equity, that is, to will things to be what they are not and cannot be; as it would be absurd and ridiculous for a Man in Arithmetical Matters, ignorantly to believe that *twice Two is not Equal to Four*; or wilfully and obstinately to contend, against his own clear knowledge, that *the Whole is not equal to all its Parts*. The only difference is, that *Assent* to a plain speculative *Truth*, is not in a Man's Power to withhold; but to *Act* according to the plain *Right*

and

and Reason of things, this he may, by the natural Liberty of his Will, forbear. But the One he *ought* to do; and it is as much his plain and indispensable *Duty*; as the other he *cannot but do*, and it is the *necessity* of his nature to do it. He that wilfully refuses to *Honour and Obey God*, from whom he received his Being, and to whom he continually owes his preservation; is really guilty of an equal absurdity and inconsistency in Practice; as he that in Speculation denies the *Effect to owe any thing to its Cause*, or the *Whole to be bigger than its Part*. He that refuses to deal with all Men equitably, and with every Man as he desires they should deal with him; is guilty of the very same unreasonableness and contradiction in One case; as he that in Another case should affirm one *Number or Quantity* to be equal to another, and yet That other at the same time *not to be equal* to the first. Lastly, he that acknowledges himself obliged to the practice of certain *Duties* both towards God and towards Men, and yet takes no care either to preserve his own Being, or at least not to preserve himself in such a state and temper of Mind and Body, as may best enable him to perform

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form those Duties ; is altogether as inexcusable and ridiculous, as he that in any other Matter should *affirm* one thing, at the same time that he *denies* another, without which the former could not possibly be *true* ; or *undertake* one thing, at the same time that he obstinately *omits* another, without which the former is by no means *practicable*. Wherefore all rational Creatures, whose Wills are not constantly and regularly determined, and their Actions governed, by right Reason and the necessary differences of good and evil, according to the eternal and invariable rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth ; but suffer themselves to be swayed by unaccountable Arbitrary Humours, and rash Passions ; by Lusts, Vanity and Pride ; by private Interest, or present sensual Pleasures : These, setting up their own unreasonable Self-will in opposition to the nature and reason of things, endeavour (as much as in Them lies) to make things be what they are not and cannot be : Which is the highest Presumption and greatest Insolence, as well as the greatest Absurdity, imaginable ; an acting contrary to that Understanding, Reason and Judgment, which



which God has implanted in their Natures on purpose to inable them to discern the difference between good and evil; an attempting to destroy that Order, by which the Universe subsists; and an offering the highest affront imaginable to the Creator of all things, who made things to be what they are, and governs every thing himself according to the Laws of their several Natures. In a word; All wilful wickedness and perversion of Right, is the very same Insolence and Absurdity in *Moral matters*; as it would be in *Natural things*, for a Man to pretend to alter the certain Proportions of Numbers, to take away the demonstrable Relations and Properties of Mathematical Figures, to make Light Darkness and Darkness Light, or to call Sweet Bitter and Bitter Sweet.

Further: As it appears thus from the *Abstract and absolute* Reason and Nature of things, that all rational Creatures *Ought*, that is, *are Obliged* to take care that their Wills and Actions be constantly determined and governed by the eternal rule of Right and Equity: So the certainty and universality of *that Obligation* is plainly confirmed, and the force of it particularly discovered and

*And from the Sense, that all even wicked men unavoidably have, of their being under such an Obligation.*

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applied to every Man, by this ; that in like manner as no one, who is instructed in Mathematicks, can forbear giving his *Assent* to every Geometrical Demonstration, of which he understands but the Terms, either by his own Study, or by having had them explained to him by others ; so no Man, who either has but patience and opportunities to examine and consider things himself, or has the means of being taught and instructed in any tolerable manner by others, concerning the necessary relations and dependencies of things ; can avoid giving his *Assent* to the fitness and reasonableness of his governing all his Actions by the Law or Rule before-mentioned, even though his *practise*, through the prevalence of brutish Lusts, be most absurdly contradictory to that *Assent* : That is ; by the reason of his mind, he cannot but be compelled to own and acknowledge, that there is really such an *Obligation* indispensably incumbent upon him ; even at the same time that in the *Actions of his life* he is endeavouring to throw it off and despise it. For the Judgment and Conscience of a Man's own Mind, concerning the Reasonableness and Fitness of the thing,  
that

that his Actions should be conformed to such or such a Rule or Law ; is the truest and formallest *obligation* ; even more properly and strictly so, than any opinion whatsoever of the Authority of the Giver of a Law, or any regard he may have to its Sanction by Rewards and Punishments. For whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind, is necessarily self-condemned ; and the greatest and strongest of all *Obligations* is that, which a Man cannot break through without condemning himself. The Dread of Superiour Power and Authority, and the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments ; however indeed absolutely necessary to the government of frail and fallible Creatures, and truly the most effectual means of keeping Them in their Duty ; is yet really in it self, only a *secondary and additional* Obligation, or *Inforcement* of the first. The original *Obligation* of all, (the ambiguous use of which word as a *Term of Art*, has caused some perplexity and confusion in this matter,) is the eternal Reason of Things ; That Reason, which God himself, who has no Superiour to direct him, and to whose Happiness nothing can be added nor any thing diminished



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nished from it, yet constantly *oblige himself* to govern the World by : And the more excellent and perfect any Creatures are, the more cheerfully and steddily are their Wills always determined by this *Supreme Obligation*, in conformity to the Nature, and in imitation of the most perfect Will of God. So far therefore as Men are conscious of what is right and wrong, so far they *Are* under an *Obligation* to act accordingly ; And consequently that eternal Rule of Right, which I have been hitherto describing, 'tis evident *Ought* as indispensably to govern Mens Actions, as it *Cannot* but necessarily determine their Assent.

*And from the judgment of mens consciences upon their own past actions.*

Now that the Case is truly thus ; that the eternal differences of Good and Evil, the unalterable rule of Right and Equity, do necessarily and unavoidably determine the Judgment, and force the Assent of all Men that use any Consideration ; is undeniably manifest from the universal *Experience* of Mankind. For no Man *willingly and deliberately* transgresses this Rule in any *great and considerable* Instance ; but he acts contrary to the judgment and reason of his own Mind, and secretly reproches himself for so doing ; and no Man observes and obeys it  
sted-

steddily, especially in cases of *difficulty and temptation*, when it interferes with any present Interest, Pleasure or Passion; but his own Mind commends and applauds him for his Resolution, in executing what his Conscience could not forbear giving its assent to, as just and right. And this is what St Paul means when he says, (*Rom. 2. 14, 15.*) that *when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which shew the work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*

It was a very wise Observation of <sup>Of that natural</sup> Plato, which he received from Socrates; <sup>knowledge</sup> that if you take a young Man, impartial <sup>which Pla-</sup> and unprejudiced, one that never had <sup>to thought</sup> any Learning, nor any Experience in <sup>to be remi-</sup> the World; and examine him about the <sup>niscence.</sup> *natural relations and proportions* of things, or the *moral differences* of Good and Evil; you may only by asking him Questions, without teaching him any thing at all directly, cause him to express in his Answers just and adæquate Notions of *Geometrical Truths*, and true

and exact determinations concerning *Matters of Right and Wrong*. From whence *He* thought it was to be concluded, that all Knowledge and Learning is nothing but Memory, or only a recollecting upon every new occasion, what had been before known in a state of *Præ-existence*: And some others both Ancients and Moderns, have concluded that the *Idea's* of all first and simple Truths, either natural or moral, are *Innate* and originally *impressed* or *stamp'd* upon the Mind. In their inference from the Observation, the Authors of both these Opinions seem to be mistaken. But thus much it proves unavoidably; That the differences, relations, and proportions of things both natural and moral, in which all unprejudiced Minds thus naturally agree, are certain, unalterable, and real *in the Things themselves*; and do not at all depend on the variable Opinions, Fancies, or Imaginations of Men prejudiced by Education, Laws, Customs or evil Practises: And also, that the Mind of Man naturally and unavoidably gives its *Assent*, as to natural and geometrical Truths, so also to the moral differences of things, and to the fitness and reasonableness of the Obligation



tion of the everlasting Law of Righteousness, whenever fairly and plainly propos'd.

Some Men indeed, who, by means of a very evil and vitious Education, or through a long Habit of Wickedness and Debauchery, have extremely corrupted the Principles of their Nature, and have long accustomed themselves to bear down their own Reason, by the force of Prejudice, Lust and Passion; that they may not be forced to confess themselves self-condemned, will confidently and absolutely contend that they do not really see any natural and necessary difference between what we call *Right* and *Wrong*, *Just* and *Unjust*; that the reason and judgment of their own Mind does not tell them they are under any such indispensable obligations, as we would endeavour to perswade them; and that they are not sensible they ought to be governed by any other Rule, than their own Will and Pleasure. But even these Men, the most profligate of all Mankind; however industriously they endeavour to conceal and deny their self-condemnation; yet cannot avoid making a discovery of it sometimes when they are not aware of it. For Example: There is no Man so vile and despe-

*The most  
profligate  
Men, not  
utterly in-  
sensible of  
the differ-  
ence of  
Good and  
Evil.*

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desperate, who commits at any time a Murder and Robbery, with the most

\* Quis est enim, aut quis unquam fuit, aut avaritia tam ardentis, aut tam effrenatis cupiditatibus, ut eandem illam rem, quam adipisci scelere quovis velit, non multis partibus malis ad sese, etiam omni impunitate proposita, sine facinore, quam illo modo perverire? Cic. de Finib. lib. 3.

unrelenting Mind; but \* would choose, if such a thing could be proposed to him, to obtain all the same profit or advantage, whatsoever it be that he aims at, *without* committing the Crime, rather than *with* it; even though

he was sure to go unpunished for committing the Crime. Nay, I believe, no Man, even in Mr *Hobbs's* State of Nature, and of Mr *Hobbs's* own Principles; but if he was equally assured of securing his main end, his self-preservation, by either way; would choose to preserve himself rather *without* destroying all his Fellow-Creatures, than *with* it; even supposing all Impunity, and all other future conveniences of Life, equal in either case. Mr *Hobbs's* own Scheme, of Mens agreeing by Compact to preserve one another, can hardly be supposed without this; And This plainly evinces, that the Mind of Man unavoidably acknowledges a natural and necessary difference between Good and Evil, antecedent to all arbitrary and positive constitution whatsoever. But

But the Truth of this, that the Mind of Man naturally and necessarily As-  
 sents to the eternal Law of Righteous-  
 ness; may still better and more clearly  
 and more universally appear, from the  
 Judgment that Men pass upon each O-  
 thers Actions, than from what we can  
 discern concerning their Consciousness  
 of [their Own. For Men may dissemble  
 and conceal from the World, the judg-  
 ment of their own Conscience; nay,  
 by a strange partiality, they may even  
 impose upon and deceive *Themselves*;  
 (For who is there, that does not some-  
 times allow himself, nay and even justi-  
 fy himself in that, wherein he condemns  
 Another?) But Mens judgments concern-  
 ing the Actions of *Others*, especially where  
 they have no relation to Themselves,  
 or repugnance to their Interest, are  
 commonly impartial; and from this we  
 may judge, what Sense Men naturally have  
 of the unalterable difference of Right  
 and Wrong. Now the observation which  
 every one cannot but make in this mat-  
 ter, is this; that *Virtue* and true *Good-  
 ness*, *Righteousness* and *Equity*, are  
 things so truly noble and excellent,  
 so lovely and venerable in themselves,  
 and do so necessarily approve themselves  
 to

*Mens nat-  
 ural  
 Sense of  
 eternal mo-  
 ral Obliga-  
 tions, pro-  
 ved from  
 the Judg-  
 ment they  
 all pass  
 upon the  
 actions of  
 Others.*



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to the Reason and Consciences of Men ; that even those very Persons, who, by the prevailing Power of some Interest or Lust, are themselves drawn aside out

† Placet suapte natura, adeoq; gratiosa virtus est, ut inficium etiam sit malis probare meliores. *Senec. de Benef. l. 4.*

of the Paths of Virtue,† can yet hardly ever forbear to give it its true Character and Commendation in O-

thers. And this Observation holds true, not only in the generality of vitious Men, but very frequently even in the worser sort of them, viz. those who persecute others for being better than themselves. Thus the Officers who were sent by the *Pharisees* to apprehend our Saviour, could not forbear declar-

Joh. 7. 46.

ing that *he spake as never Man spake :*

And the *Roman* Governour, when he gave Sentence that he should be Crucified, could not at the same instant forbear openly declaring, that he *found no fault* in him. Even in this case, Men

Joh. 12.  
38.

cannot chuse but think well of those persons, whom the *dominion of their Lusts* will not suffer them to imitate, or whom their present *Interest and the Necessity of their worldly Affairs* compels them to discourage. They cannot but desire, tht they themselves were the Men they are not ; and wish with *Balaam,*

*laam,*

saam, that though they *imitate not the life*, yet at least they might *die the death of the righteous*, and that their *last end* might be like *theirs*. And hence it is that *Plato* judiciously observes, that

\* even the worst of Men seldom or never make so wrong Judgments concerning *Persons*, as they do concerning *Things*; there being in *Virtue* an unaccountable and as it were *divine* force, which, whatever confusion Men

indeavour to introduce in *Things* by their vitious discourses and debauched practises, yet almost always compels them to distinguish right concerning *Persons*, and makes them admire and praise Just and Equitable and Honest Men. On the contrary; *Vice* and *Injustice*, *Profaneness* and *Debauchery*, are things so absolutely odious in their own Nature, that however they *insinuate* themselves into the *practise*, yet they can never gain over to themselves the *judgment* of mankind. They who *Do evil*, yet *See and Approve* what is good; and condemn in *others*, what they blindly allow in *themselves*; nay and very frequently

\* Οὐ γὰρ ὅσον εἰσὶν ἀρετῆς ἀποσφαλλόμενοι τυγχάνουσιν οἱ πολλοί, πρὸς τὸν καὶ τὰ κρίνειν τὰς ἀλλὰς οἱ πονηροὶ καὶ ἀχρεῖς. Δείον δὲ πρὸς εὐστοχὸν ὅτι καὶ πῖσι κακοῖς, ὥς πάλιν πολλοὶ καὶ τῷ σοφώδεα κακῶν ἐν πῖσι λόγοις καὶ δόξαις διαίρυνται τὰ ἀμείνους ὅς ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὰ χείρους.  
Plato de Leg. lib. 12.

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quently condemn even *themselves* also, not without great disorder and uneasiness of Mind, in those very things wherein they allow themselves. At least, there is hardly any wicked Man, but when his own Case is represented to him under the person of another, will freely enough pass sentence against the wickedness he himself is guilty of; and with sufficient severity, exclaim against all Iniquity. This shows abundantly, that all variation from the eternal rule of Right, is *absolutely and in the nature of the Thing it self* to be abhorred and detested; and that the unprejudiced mind of Man, as naturally *disapproves injustice* in moral matters, as in natural things it cannot but *dissent from falsehood, or dislike incongruities*. Even in reading the Histories of past and far distant Ages, where 'tis manifest we can have no concern for the *events of things*, nor prejudices concerning the *Characters of Persons*; Who is there, that does not praise and admire, nay highly esteem and in his imagination love (as it were) the Equity, Justice, Truth and Fidelity of some persons; and with the greatest Indignation and hatred, detest the Barbarity, Injustice, and Treachery of others? Nay further; when



when the prejudices of corrupt Minds, lie all on the side of Injustice ; as when we have obtained some very great profit or advantage through another Man's Treachery or Breach of Faith ; yet

\* who is there, that upon that very occasion does not (even to a Proverb) dislike the *Person* and the *Action*, how much soever he may rejoyce at the

\* Quis Pullum Numitorem, Fregellanum proditorem, quanquam Reipublicæ nostræ profuit, non odit ? Cic. de Finib. lib. 5.

*Event* ? But when we come our selves to *Suffer* by Iniquity, *Then* Where are all the Arguments and Sophistries, by which Unjust Men, while they are Oppressing others, would perswade themselves that they are not sensible of any natural difference betwixt good and evil ? When it comes to be these Mens own case, to be oppressed by Violence, or over-reached by Fraud ; where *Then* are all their Pleas against the eternal distinction of Right and Wrong ? How, on the contrary, do they *Then* cry out for Equity, and exclaim against Injustice ! How do they *Then* challenge and object against Providence, and think neither God nor Man severe enough, in punishing the Violators of Right and Truth ! Whereas if  
there

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there was no natural and eternal difference, between Just and Unjust ; no Man could have any reason to complain of injury, any other than what Laws and Compacts made so ; which in innumerable cases will be always to be evaded.

*An Answer  
to the Ob-  
jection  
drawn  
from the  
total igno-  
rance of  
some barba-  
rous Nati-  
ons in mat-  
ters of Mo-  
rality.*

There is but one thing, that I am sensible of, which can here with any Colour be objected against what has been hitherto said concerning the Necessity of the Mind's giving its Assent to the eternal Law of Righteousness ; And That is, the *total Ignorance*, which some whole Nations are reported to lie under, of the nature and force of these moral Obligations. The Matter of Fact, is not very true : But if it was, 'tis certain there are more Nations and People totally ignorant of the plainest Mathematical Truths ; as, of the proportion, for Example, of a *Square* to a *Triangle* of the same Base and Heighth : And yet these Truths are such, to which the Mind cannot but give its assent necessarily and unavoidably, as soon as they are distinctly proposed to it. All that this Objection proves therefore, supposing the Matter of it to be true, is only this ; not that the mind of Man, can ever dissent from the

rule

rule of Right ; much less, that there is no necessary difference in nature between moral Good and Evil ; any more than it proves, that there is no certain and necessary proportions of Numbers, Lines, or Figures : But this it proves only, that Men have great need to be taught and instructed in some very plain and easy, as well as certain, Truths ; and, if they be of importance, that they have need also to have them frequently inculcated and strongly inforced upon them. Which is very true : And is (as shall hereafter be particularly made appear) one good Argument for the reasonableness of expecting a *Revelation*.

4. Thus it appears *in general*, that the mind of Man cannot avoid giving its *Affent* to the eternal Law of Righteousness ; that is, cannot but acknowledge the reasonableness and fitness of Mens governing all their Actions by the rule of Right or Equity ; and also that this *Affent* is † a *formal Obligation* † upon every Man, actually and constantly to conform himself to that Rule. I might Now from hence deduce *in particular*, all the several Duties of Morality or Natural Religion. But because this would take up too large a portion

*Of the principal Moral Obligations in particular.*

† See pag. 69.



of my intended Discourse, and may easily be supplied abundantly out of several late excellent Writers; I shall only mention the three great and principal Branches, from which all the other and smaller instances of duty do naturally flow, or may without difficulty be derived.

*of Piety,  
or Mens  
duty to-  
wards  
God.*

*First then, in respect of God, the Rule of Righteousness is; that we keep up constantly in our minds, the highest possible Honour, Esteem, and Veneration for him; which must express it self in proper and respective influences upon all our Passions, and in the suitable direction of all our Actions: That we worship and adore Him, and Him alone, as the only Supreme Author, Preserver, and Governor of all things: That we employ our whole Beings, and all our Powers and Faculties, in his Service and for his Glory; that is, in encouraging the practise of universal Righteousness, and promoting the designs of his divine Goodness amongst Men, in such way and manner as shall at any time appear to be his Will we should do it: And finally, that, to enable us to do this continually, we pray unto him constantly for whatever we stand in need of, and return him continual and hearty*  
*Thanks*

*Thanks for whatever good things we at any time receive.* There is no Congruity or Proportion, in the uniform disposition and correspondent order of any Bodies or Magnitudes; no Fitness or Agreement in the application of similar and equal Geometrical Figures one to another, or in the comparing them one with another; so visible, and conspicuous; as is the Beauty and Harmony of the exercise of Gods several Attributes, meeting with suitable returns of Duty and Honour from all his rational Creatures throughout the Universe. The consideration of his *Eternity and Infinity*, his *Knowledge* and his *Wisdom*, necessarily commands our highest *Admiration*: The sense of his *Omnipresence*, forces a perpetual awful *Regard* towards him: His *Supreme Authority*, as being the *Creator, Preserver, and absolute Governour* of all things, obliges us to pay him all possible *Honour and Veneration, Adoration and Worship*; And his *Unity* requires, that it be paid to *Him alone*: His *Power* and *Justice*, demand our *Fear*: His *Mercy and Placableness*, encourage our *Hope*: His *Goodness*, necessarily excites our *Love*: His *Veracity and Unchangeableness*, secure our *Trust*

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in him : The sense of our having *received our Beings and all our Powers from him*, makes it infinitely reasonable that we should *employ our whole Beings and all our Faculties in his Service* : The Consciousness of our continual *Dependence* upon him, both for our *Preservation* and the *Supply* of every thing we want ; obliges us to constant *Prayer* : And *every good thing we enjoy*, the Air we breathe and the Food we eat, the Rain from Heaven and the fruitful Seasons, all the Blessings and Comforts of the *present time*, and the Hopes and Expectations we have of *what is to come* ; do

\* Quem vero Astrorum Ordines, quem dierum noctiumq; vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemq; ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non *Gratum* esse cogant ; hunc Hominem omnino numerare qui decet ? Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

Εἰ γὰρ νῦν εἴχομεν, ἀλλό τι ἔστι ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ εὐφραίνειν καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας ; ἢ καὶ ἔστι καὶ σκῆπτρον καὶ ἀρῶντας καὶ ἐδιδόντας ἀδελφῶν ἢ ὑμνον ἢ εἰς τὸ θεῖον Μέγας ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἡμῖν παρέχεν ὄργανα πάντα διὰ ὧν τὴν γυνεργασόμεθα ; Μέγας ὁ θεὸς ὅτι χάριτος δέδωκεν, &c. Arrian. lib. 1. cap. 16.

\* All demand our heartiest *Gratitude and Thanksgiving* to him. The Suitableness and Proportion, the Correspondency and Connexion of each of these things respectively, is as plain and conspicuous, as the shining of the Sun at Noon-day ; And it is the greatest Absurdity and Perverseness in the World, for Creatures indued with *Reason* to attempt to break through and transgress this neces-



necessary Order and Dependency of things. All *Inanimate* and all *Irrational* Beings, by the *Necessity* of their nature, constantly obey the Laws of their Creation; and tend regularly to the Ends, for which they were appointed. How monstrous then is it, that *Reasonable Creatures*, merely because they are not Necessitated, should abuse that glorious privilege of *Liberty*, by which they are exalted in dignity above the rest of Gods creation, to make themselves the Alone *Unreasonable* and Disorderly part of the Universe! That a *Tree* planted in a fruitful Soil, and watered continually with the Dew of Heaven, and cherished constantly with the kindly warmth and benign influence of the Sun-beams, should yet never bring forth either *Leaves* or *Fruit*; is not half so irregular and contrary to nature, as that a *Rational Being*, created after the Image of God, and conscious of God's doing every thing for him, that becomes the relation of an infinitely good and bountiful Creator to his Creature; should yet never on His part make any return of those Duties, which arise necessarily from the relation of a Creature to his Creator.

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*Of Righte-  
ousness, or  
the Duty  
of Men one  
towards  
another.*

*Secondly*; in respect of our *Fellow-creatures*, the Rule of Righteousness is ; *that in particular we so deal with every Man, as in like circumstances we could reasonably expect he should deal with us ; and that in general we endeavour, by an universal Benevolence, to promote the welfare and happiness of all Men.* The former branch of this Rule, is *Equity* ; the latter, is *Love*.

*Of Justice  
and Equi-  
ty.*

As to the former, *viz. Equity* : The Reason which *Obliges* every Man in *Practise*, so to deal always with another, as he would reasonably expect *That Other* should in like circumstances deal with *Him* ; is the very same, as that which *forces* him in *Speculation* to affirm, that if one Line or Number be equal to another, *That other* is reciprocally equal to It. *Iniquity* is the very same in *Action*, as *Falsity* or *Contradiction* in *Theory* ; and the same cause which makes the one *absurd*, makes the other *unreasonable*. Whatever relation or proportion, one Man in any case bears to another ; the same *That Other*, when put in like circumstances, bears to *Him*. Whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable, for *Another* to do for *Me* ; *That* by the same judgment I de-  
clare

clare reasonable or unreasonable, that I in the like case should do for *Him* : And to deny this either in word or action, is as if a Man should contend, that, though *two* and *three* are equal to *five*, yet *three* and *two* are not so. Wherefore

\* were not Men strangely and most unnaturally corrupted, by *perverse and unaccountable vanity of opinions*, and *monstrous evil customs and habits*, prevailing against the clearest and plainest reason in the World : It would be impossible, that universal Equity should not be practised by all Mankind ; and especially among *Equals*, where the proportion of Equity is simple and obvious, and every Mans own case is already the same with all others, without any nice comparing or transposing of circumstances : It would be as impossible, that

\* a Man, contrary to the eternal reason of things, should desire to gain some small profit to Himself, by doing violence and damage to his Neighbour ; as that

\* Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam Omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. Quod si depravatio consuetudinum, si opinionum vanitas, non imbecillitatem animorum torqueret, & flecteret quocunq; capisset ; sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes sunt omnium, — & coleretur Jus æque ab omnibus. Cic. de leg. lib. 1.

\* Hoc exigit ipsa Naturæ ratio, quæ est lex divina & humana ; cui parere qui velit, nunquam committet ut alienum appetat, & id, quod alteri detraxerit, sibi assumat. Cic. de Offic. lib. 3.



he should be willing to be deprived of Necessaries himself, to satisfy the unreasonable Covetousness or Ambition of another : In a word ; it would be impossible for Men not to be as much ashamed of *Doing Iniquity*, as they are of *Believing Contradictions*. In considering indeed the Duties of *Superiours* and *Inferiours* in various relations, the proportion of Equity is somewhat more complex ; But still it may always be deduced from the same rule, of *Doing as we would be done by*, if careful regard be had at the same time to the *Difference of Relation* ; That is, if in considering what is fit for you to do to another, you always take into the account, not only every circumstance of the *Action*, but also every circumstance wherein the *Person* differs from you ; And in judging what you would desire that Another, if your circumstances were transposed, should do to you ; you always consider, not what any unreasonable passion or private interest would prompt you, but what impartial reason would dictate to you to desire. For Example : A *Magistrate*, in order to deal equitably with a *Criminal*, is not to consider what *Fear* or *Self-Love* would cause Him,

in

in the Criminals case, to *desire* ; but what *Reason* and the *publick Good* would oblige him to *acknowledge* was fit and just for him to *expect*. And the same Proportion is to be observed, in deducing the Duties of *Parents* and *Children*, of *Masters* and *Servants*, of *Governours* and *Subjects*, of *Citizens* and *Foreigners* ; in what manner every Person is obliged by the Rule of *Equity*, to behave himself in each of these and all other Relations. In the regular and uniform Practise of all which Duties among all Mankind, in their several and respective relations, through the whole Earth ; consists that *Universal Justice*, which is the Top and Perfection of all Virtues :

Which, if, as \* *Plato* says, it could be represented visibly to mortal Eyes, would raise in us an inexpressible Love and Admiration of it :

Which would introduce into the World such a glorious and happy state, as the antient Poets have attempted to describe in their Fiction of a golden Age : Which in it self, is so truly beautiful and lovely, that, as

\* *Aristotle* elegantly expresses it, the Motions of the

\* Quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait *Plato*, excitaret sapientia. *Cic. de Offic. l. 1.*

\* Ἄυτη μὲν ἐν ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη, ἀρετὴ μὲν ἔστι τέλεια· καὶ ἡ δ' ἔσπερος ἡ δ' ἑὸν ἔτι δαύμασόν. *Eth. lib. 5. c. 3.*

hea-

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heavenly Bodies are not so admirably regular and harmonious, nor the brightness of the Sun and Stars so ornamental to the visible fabrick of the World, as the universal practise of this illustrious Virtue would be conducive to the glory and advantage of the rational part of this lower Creation: *Which*, lastly, is so truly noble and excellent in its own nature, that the wisest and most considering Men have always declared, that

\* Non enim mihi est vita mea utilior, quam animi talis affectio, neminem ut violem commodi mei gratia. Cic. de Offic. lib. 3.

† Καὶ το παρ' ἅπαν ζῶντων μὴ κακόν, ‡ εὐμπατὰ χρόνον ἀθάνατον ὄντα, καὶ κεκτημένον πάντα τὰ λεγόμενα ἀγαθὰ, πλὴν δικαιοσύνης † καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀπάσης. Plato de Leg. lib. 2.

\* neither Life it self, nor † all other possible enjoyments in the World, put together, are of any value or esteem at all, in comparison of, or in competition with, that right temper and disposition of mind, from which flows the practise of this univer-

sal Justice and Equity. On the contrary: *Injustice* and *Iniquity*, Violence, Fraud and Oppression; the universal confusion of right and wrong, and the general neglect and contempt of all the duties arising from Mens several relations one to another; is the greatest and most unnatural corruption of Gods Creation, that 'tis possible for depraved  
and



and rebellious creatures to introduce : As they themselves, who practise iniquity most, and are most desirous to defend it, yet whenever it comes to be their own Turn to suffer by it, are not very backward to acknowledge. To comprise this matter therefore in one word : What the Sun forsaking that equal course, which now, by diffusing gentle warmth and light, cherishes and invigorates every thing in a due proportion through the whole System ; and on the contrary, his burning up, by an irregular and disorderly motion, some of the Orbs with insupportable heat, and leaving others to perish in extreme cold and darkness ; would be to the *natural World* : That very same thing, Injustice and Tyranny, Iniquity and all Wickedness, is to the *moral and rational* part of the Creation. The only difference, is this : That the one is an *obstinate and wilful* corruption, and most *perverse* depravation of creatures made after the Image of God ; and a violating the *eternal and unalterable* Law or Reason of things, which is of the utmost Importance ; Whereas the Other would be only a revolution or change of the *arbitrary and temporary* frame of Nature.

Th

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*of univer-  
sal mutual  
Benevo-  
lence.*

The second Branch of the Rule of  
 Righteousness with respect to our fel-  
 low-creatures, I said, was *universal Love*  
*or Benevolence* ; that is, not only the  
 doing barely what is just and right, in  
 our dealings with every Man ; but also  
 a constant endeavouring to promote in  
 general, to the utmost of our power,  
 the welfare and happiness of All Men.  
 The Obligation to which duty also,  
 may easily be deduced from what has  
 been already laid down. For if (as has  
 been before proved) there be a natural  
 and necessary difference between Good  
 and Evil ; and that which is Good is fit  
 and reasonable, and that which is Evil  
 is unreasonable to be done ; and that  
 which is the greatest Good, is always  
 the *most* fit and reasonable to be cho-  
 sen ; Then, as the Goodness of God  
 extends it self universally over all his  
 works through the whole Creation, by  
 doing always what is absolutely Best in  
 the whole ; so every rational Creature  
*ought* in its Sphere and Station, accord-  
 ing to its respective powers and facul-  
 ties, to do all the Good it can to all its  
 fellow-creatures : To which end, *uni-  
versal Love and Benevolence* is as plainly  
 the most direct, certain, and effectual  
 means ;

means; as \* in Mathematicks the *flowing of a Point*, is, to produce a *Line*; or in Arithmetick, the *Addition of Numbers*, to produce a *Summ*; or in Physicks, *certain kinds of Motions*, to *preserve certain Bodies*, which other kinds of Motions tend to corrupt. Of all which, the mind of Man is so naturally sensible, that, except in such Men whose Affections are prodigiously corrupted by most unnatural and habitual vicious practises, there is no Duty whatsoever, the performance whereof affords a Man so \* ample pleasure and satisfaction, and fills his mind with so comfortable a sense, of his having done the greatest Good he was capable to do, of his having best answered the end of his Creation, and nearest imitated the Perfections of his Creatour, and bona possint suppeditare. *Id. ibid.*

\* Universaliter autem verum est, quod non certius *fluxus puncti* Lineam producit, aut *additio numerorum* Summam, quam quod *Benevolentia* effectum præstat bonum. *Cumberland: de Leg. Naturæ. pag. 10.*

Pari sane ratione [*ac in Arithmeticis operationibus*] *Doctrinæ Moralis* veritas fundatur in immutabili coherrentia inter *Felicitatem Summam* quam hominum vires assequi valent, & *Affectus benevolentie universalis*. *Id. ibid. pag. 23.*

Eadem est mensura *Boni Malique*, quæ mensura est *veri falsiq;* in propositionibus pronuntiantibus de *efficacia Motuum* ad rerum aliarum *conservationem & corruptionem* facientium. *Id. pag. 30.*

\* Angusta admodum est circa nostra tantummodo commoda, *Laticæ materia*; sed eadem erit amplissima, si aliorum omnium *Felicitas* cordi nobis sit. Quippe hæc ad illam, eandem habebit proportionem, quam habet immensa *Beatitudo Dei*, totiusq; *humani generis*, ad curram illam *fictæ felicitatis suppellectilem*, quam uni homini, eiq; *invido & malevole, fortunæ* *pag. 214.*



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consequently of his having fully complied with the highest and principal Obligations of his Nature ; as the performance of this One Duty , of *universal Love and Benevolence*, naturally affords. But further : The Obligation to this great Duty, may also otherwise be deduced from the *Nature of Man*, in the following manner. Next to that natural *Self-love*, or Care of his own Preservation, which every one necessarily has in the first place for *himself* ; there is in all Men a certain natural Affection for their *Children and Posterity*, who have a dependence upon them ; and for their near *Relations and Friends*, who have an intimacy with them. And because the Nature of Man is such, that they cannot live comfortably in independent Families, without still further Society and Commerce with each other ; therefore they naturally desire to increase their dependencies, by multiplying Affinities ; and to enlarge their friendships, by mutual good offices ; and to establish Societies, by a communication of Arts and Labour : Till \* by degrees the Affection of *single Persons*, becomes a Friend-

\* In omni honesto, nihil est tam illustre, nec quod latius pateat, quam conjun-

Frien  
and  
a So  
ties  
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Friendship of *Families* ; and this enlarges it self to a Society of *Towns and Cities* and *Nations* ; and terminates in the agreeing *Community of all Mankind*.

The Foundation, Preservation, and Perfection of which universal Friend-

ship or Society, is *mutual Love and Benevolence* ; And nothing hinders the World from being *actually* put into so happy a state, but perverse Iniquity and unreasonable want of mutual Charity. Wherefore since Men are plainly so constituted by Nature, that they stand in need of each others assistance to make themselves easy in the World ; and are fitted to live in Communities ; and Society is absolutely necessary for them ; and mutual love and benevolence is the only possible means to establish this Society in any tolerable and durable manner ; and in this respect

\* All Men stand upon the same level, and have the same natural wants and desires, and are in the same need of each others help, and are equally ca-

atio inter homines hominum, & quasi quædam societas & communicatio utilitatum, & ipsa Charitas generis humani, quæ nata a primo factu, quo a procreatoribus nati diliguntur, ——— serpit sensim foras, cognationibus primum, ——— deinde totius complexu gentis humanæ. Cic. de Finib. lib. 5.

\* Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. Quod nisi depravatio &c ; sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes sunt omnium. Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

pable

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pable of injoying the benefit and advantage of Society; 'Tis evident every Man is bound by the Law of his Nature, as he is also prompted by the

† Impellimur autem Natura, ut prodesse velimus quamplurimis. *Cic. de Finib. lib. 3.*

\* Hominem esse quasi partem quandam civitatis & universi generis humani, eumq; esse conjunctum cum hominibus Humana quadam Societate. *Cic. Quæst. Academ lib. 1.*

|| Homines hominum causa sunt generati, ut ipsi inter se alii aliis prodesse possint. *Cic. de Offic. lib. 1.*

Ad tuendos conservandosq; homines hominem natum esse. *Cic. de Finib. lib. 3.*

† Omnes inter se naturali quadam indulgentia & benevolentia contineri. *Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.*

\* Ex quo efficitur, hominem naturæ obediens, homini nocere non posse. *Cic. de Offic. lib. 3.*

|| Οὐτε ἄρα ἀνιδίκα ἐν δὲ, ἔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἐδ' ἂν ὅπῃ πᾶσι ὁ αὐτῶν. *Plato in Critone.*

† Inclination of his uncorrupted Affections, to \* look upon himself as a part and member of that one universal body or community, which is made up of all Mankind; to think himself || born to promote the publick good and welfare of all his fellow-creatures; and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only effectual means to that End, to † embrace them All with universal Love and Benevolence; So that he \* cannot, without acting contrary to the Reason of his own mind, and transgressing the plain and known Law of his Being, do willingly any hurt and mischief to any Man; no, || not even to those who have first



first injured him; but ought, for the publick benefit, to endeavour to appease with gentleness, rather than exasperate with retaliations; and finally, to comprehend all in one word, (which is the Top and complete Perfection of this great Duty,) ought to † *Love all others as himself.* This is the Argumentation of that great Master, *Cicero*; Whose knowledge and understanding of the true state of things, and of the original obligations of humane nature, was as much greater than Mr *Hobbs's*; as his helps and advantages to attain that knowledge, were less.

† Tum illud effici, quod cuiusdam incredibile videatur, sic autem necessarium, ut nihilo sese plus quam alterum diligat. Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

Thirdly; with respect to *our Selves*, Of Sobriety, or Mens Duty to- the Rule of Righteousness is; that every Man preserve his own Being, wards as long as he is able; and take care to keep Themselves; himself at all times in such temper and and of the disposition both of Body and Mind, as Unlawfulness of may best fit and enable him to perform his Self-mur- Duty in all other Instances: That is; he der. ought to bridle his Appetites, with Temperance; to govern his Passions, with Moderation; and to apply himself to the business of his present Station in the World, whatsoever it be, with Attention and Content-

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*tentment.* That every Man ought to preserve his own Being as long as he is able, is evident ; because what he is not himself the Author and Giver of, he can never of himself have just Power or Authority to take away. He that sent us into the World, and alone knows for how long time he appointed us our Station here, and when we have finished all the business he intended we should do ; can alone judge when it is fit for us to be taken hence, and has alone Authority to dismiss and discharge us. This reasoning has been admirably applied by *Plato, Cicero*, and others of the best Philosophers : So that though the *Stoicks* of old, and the *Deists* of late, have in their ranting Discourses, and some few of them in their rash Practise, contradicted it ; yet they have never been able, with any colour of reason, to answer or evade the force of the Argument : Which indeed, to speak the Truth, has been urged by the fore-mentioned Philosophers, with such singular Beauty, as well as invincible strength, that is seems not capable of having any thing added to it. Wherefore I shall give it you only in some of their own words.

*We*

We Men, (says \* Plato in the person of Socrates,) are all, by the appointment of God, in a certain prison or custody, which we ought not to break out of, and run away. We are as Servants, or as Cattle, in the hand of God : And would not any of Us, saith he, if one of our Servants should, contrary to our direction, and to escape out of our Service, kill himself; think we had just reason to be very angry, and, if it was in our Power, punish him for it ? So likewise Cicero : God, says \* he, the Supreme Governour of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his Order : And though, when the divine Providence does it self offer us a just occasion of leaving this World, (as when a Man chooses to suffer Death rather than commit Wickedness,) a wise Man will then indeed depart joyfully, as out of a place of Sorrow and Darkness into Light ; yet he will not be in such hast, as to break his prison con-

H 2

trary

\* Ἐν παντὶ σφέρα ἴσμεν οὐ  
ἀνθρώποι, καὶ εἰ δὲ δὴ αὐτῶν  
ἐκ ταύτης λύειν, εἰδὲ ἀποδι-  
δράσκουσιν. --- Θεὸς ἔτι ἡμῶν  
ποῦ ἐπιμελεσφόρος, καὶ ἡμᾶς  
τὰς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῇ κτημά-  
των τοῖς δεοῖς ἔτι. --- Οὐκ ἔν  
καὶ σὺ, ἀντὶ τῆς αὐτῆς κτημάτων  
ἐπὶ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἀποκλιννύοι,  
μὴ σημήνασθός σε ὅτι βέλῃ  
αὐτὸ τεθνήσκειν, χαλεπάνοις  
ἀν' αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰ πᾶσα ἔχῃς πί-  
μωειαν, τιμωροῖο αὖ. Plato  
in Phæd.

\* Verat enim dominans  
ille in nobis Deus, in iussu  
hinc nos suo demigrare.  
Cum vero causam justam  
Deus ipse dederit, nã ille  
medius fidius vir sapiens,  
lætus ex his tenebris in lu-  
cem illam excesserit; nec  
tamen illa vincula carceris  
ruperit; leges enim vetant;  
sed tanquam a magistratu,  
aut ab aliqua potestate legi-  
tima, sic a Deo evocatus;  
atq; emissus exierit. Cic.  
Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1.



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*trary to Law ; but will go when God calls him, as a Prisoner when dismissed by the Magistrate or lawful Power. Again : That short remainder of Life , faith*

\* Illud breve vitæ reliquum nec avide appetendum Senibus, nec sine causa deferendum est; Vetatq; Pythagoras, iniussu Imperatoris id est, Dei, de praesidio & statione vitæ decedere. Cic. de Senect.

\* he, which old Men have a prospect of, they ought neither too eagerly to desire, nor yet on the contrary unreasonably and discontentedly deprive themselves of it : For, as Pythagoras teaches, it is as unlawful for a Man,

without the command of God, to remove himself out of the World ; as for a Soldier to leave his Post without his Generals Order. And in another Place : Unless

† Nisi enim Deus is, cuius hoc Templum est omne quod conspicis, istis te corporis custodiis liberaverit ; huc tibi aditus patere non potest. — Quare & tibi & piis omnibus retinendus est animus in custodia corporis ; nec iniussu ejus, a quo ille est nobis datus, ex hominum vita migrandum est ; ne munus humanum assignatum a Deo defugisse videamini. Cic. Somn. Scipion.

That God, faith † he, whose Temple and Palace this whole World is, discharges you himself out of the prison of the Body ; you can never be received to his Favour. Wherefore you, and all pious Men, ought to have patience to continue in the Body, as long as God shall please, who sent us hither ; and not force your selves out of the

World, before he calls for you ; least you be found Deserters of the Station appointed you

you by God. And, to mention no more ;  
That excellent Author, *Arrian* ; Wait,  
saith \* he, *the good plea-*  
*sure of God : When He*  
*signifies it to be his Will*  
*that you should be dis-*  
*charged from this Service,*  
*then depart willingly ; But*  
*in the mean time, have*  
*Patience and tarry in the*  
*place where he has appoin-*  
*ted you : Wait, and do not hurry*  
*your selves away wilfully and unrea-*  
*sonably. The Objections, which the Au-*  
*thor of the Defense of Self murder, pre-*  
*fixed to the Oracles of Reason, has at-*  
*tempted to advance against this Argu-*  
*ment ; are so very weak and childish,*  
*that 'tis evident he could not, at the*  
*time when he wrote them, believe in*  
*earnest that there was any force in them :*  
*As when he says, that the reason why*  
*it is not lawful for a Centinel to leave*  
*his Station without his Commanders*  
*Order, is because he entred into the*  
*Service by his own Consent ; as if God had*  
*not a just Power to lay any Commands*  
*upon his Creatures, without their own*  
*Consent : Or when he says, that there*  
*are many lawful ways to seek Death*  
*in ; as if, because a Man may lawfully*

\* Εκδέξαδε τὸ θεὸν ὅταν  
ἐκέλευε σπῆναι ἡμᾶς ἢ ἀπολύσει  
ὑμᾶς, ταύτης τῆς ὑπακοῆς,  
τέτ' ἀπολύετε πρὸς αὐτόν·  
ἐπὶ ᾧ τὸ παρὸν ἀνάγκη  
ἐνοικῶντες τῷ πότῳ τὸ χρεόν,  
εἰς ᾧ ἐκέλευε ὑμᾶς ἐταξέν·  
Μείνατε, καὶ ἀλόγως ἀπὸ  
δοῦτε. *Arrian. lib. 1.*

*venture his life* in many publick Services, therefore it was lawful for him directly to *throw it away* upon any foolish discontent. But the Author of that Discourse has since been so just, as to confess his Folly, and retract it publicly himself. Wherefore to proceed : For the same reason that a Man is obliged, to preserve his own *Being* at all ; he is bound likewise to preserve himself, as far as he is able, in the right use of all his *Faculties* ; that is, to keep himself constantly in such temper both of Body and Mind, by regulating his Appetites and Passions, as may best fit and enable him to perform his Duty in all other Instances. For, as it matters not whether a Soldier deserts his Post, or by Drunkenness renders himself incapable of performing his Duty in it : So, for a Man to disable himself by any Intemperance or Passion, from performing the necessary Duties of Life ; is, at least for that time, the same thing as depriving himself of Life. And neither is this all. For great Intemperance and ungoverned Passions, not only incapacitate a Man to perform his Duty ; but also expose him to run headlong into the Commission of the greatest Enormities : There being no Violence or Injustice whatsoever, which



which a Man who has deprived himself of his Reason by Intemperance or Passion, is not capable of being tempted to commit : So that all the additional Obligations which a Man is any way under, to forbear committing the most flagrant Crimes; lie equally upon him to govern his Passions and restrain his Appetites ; without doing which, he can never secure himself effectually, from being betrayed into the commission of all Iniquity. This is indeed the great difficulty of Life, to subdue and conquer our unreasonable Appetites and Passions : But it is absolutely necessary to be done ; And

\* tis moreover the bravest and most glorious Conquest in the World. Lastly ; for the same Reason that a Man is obliged not to depart wilfully out of this Life, which is the *general Station* that God has appointed him ; he is obliged likewise to attend the Duties of that *particular Station* or condition of life, whatsoever it be, wherein Providence has *at present* placed him ; with diligence, and contentment ; Without being either uneasy and discontented, that others are placed by Providence in different and superiour Stati-

\*Οἱ μὲν ἀσκήσεις ἐνεκα  
πάλης ἢ δρόμων ἢ τῶν τοιού-  
των, ἐτόλμησαν ἀπέχεσθαι.--  
Οἱ δὲ ἡμέτεροι παῖδες, ἀ-  
δυνατῆσκει καρτερεῖν, πολὺ  
καλλίον ὁ ἐνεκα νίκης ; Pla-  
to de Leg. lib. 8.

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ons in the World ; or so extremely and unreasonably solicitous to change his State *for the future*, as thereby to neglect his *present Duty*.

From these three great and general Branches, all the smaller and more particular Instances of Moral Obligations, may (as I said) easily be deduced.

*The Law of Nature, eternal, universal, and absolutely unchangeable.*

5. And now, This is that *right Reason*, which makes the principal Distinction betwixt *Man and Beasts*. This is that *Law of Nature*, which (as Cicero

\* Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo ; vetando, a fraude deterreat. — Huic legi nec propagari fas est, neq; derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neq; tota abrogari potest. Nec vero aut per Senatum, aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus. *Cic. de Repub. lib. 3. fragment.*

† Lex quæ seculis omnibus ante nata est, quam scripta lex ulla aut quam omnino civitas constituta. *Cic. de Leg. lib. 1.*

‖ Legem, neq; hominum ingeniis excogitatam, neq; scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regat. *Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.*

excellently expresses it) is *\* of universal extent, and everlasting duration ; which can neither be wholly abrogated, nor repealed in any part of it, nor be changed in any instance, nor dispensed with by any Authority : Which † was in force, before ever any Law was written, or the foundation of any City, or Common wealth was laid : Which ‖ was not invented by the Wit of Men, nor established by the Authority of any people ; but its Obligation was from eternity, and the force of it reaches*

*ches*

ches throughout the Universe: Which

\* being founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, did not then begin to be a Law, when it was first written and enacted by Men; but is of the same original with the eternal Reasons or Proportions of things, and the Perfections or Attributes of God himself; so that if there was no law at Rome

\* Nec si regnante Tarquinio, nulla erat Romæ scripta lex de stupris, idcirco non contra illam legem sempiternam Sextus Tarquinius vim Lucretiæ attulit. Erat enim ratio profecta a rerum natura, & ad recte faciendum impellens, & a delicto avocans; quæ non tum deniq; incipit lex esse, cum scripta est; sed tum cum orta est; orta autem simul est cum mente divina. Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

against Rapes, at that time when Tarquin offered violence to Lucretia, it does not therefore follow that he was any whit the more excusable, or that his Sin against the eternal Rule of Equity was at all the less heinous. This is that Law of Nature,

† to which the Reason of all Men every where as naturally and necessarily assents, as all Animals conspire in the pulse and motion of their Heart and Arteries, or as all Men agree in their judgment concerning the

† In judicio de bonitate harum rerum, a que omnes ubiq; conveniunt, ac omnia Animalia in motu Cordis & Arteriarum pulsu, aut omnes homines in opinione de nivis candore & splendore Solis. Cumberland de Leg. Natura, pag. 167.

whiteness of Snow or the Brightness of the Sun: For though in some nice Cases, the bounds of right and wrong may indeed (as was before observed) be somewhat



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somewhat difficult to determine ; and in some few even plainer cases, the Laws and Customs of certain barbarous Nations may be contrary one to another ; (which some have been so weak as to think a just Objection against there being any natural difference between Good and Evil at all ;) yet in reality,

\* Hoc tamen non magistrolit consensum hominum de generali Natura Boni, ejusq; partibus vel speciebus præcipuis, quam levis vultuum diversitas tollit convenientiam inter homines in communi hominum definitione, aut similitudinem inter eos in partium principalium conformatione & usu. Nulla gens est, quæ non sentiat adus deum diligendi, &c. Nulla gens non sentit gratitudinem erga parentes & benefactores toti humano generi salutare esse. Nulla temperamentorum diversitas facit ut quisquam non bonum esse sentiat universis, ut singulorum innocentium viæ, membra, & libertas conserventur. Cumberland. de Legib. Naturæ. pag. 166.

Neq; enim an honorifice de Deo sentiendum sit, neq; an sit amandus, timendus, colendus, dubitari potest. Sunt enim hæc Religionum per omnes gentes communia. — Deum eo ipso, quod homines fecerit rationales, hoc illis præcepisse, & cordibus omnium insculpisse, ne quisquam cuiquam faceret, quod alium sibi facere iniquum duceret. Hobbs de Homine, cap. 14. [*Inconsistently enough with his own Principles.*]

*this \* no more disproves the natural Assent of all Mens unprejudiced Reason to the Rule of Right and Equity, than the difference of most Mens Countenances in general, or the deformity of some few Monsters in particular, proves that there is no general Likeness or Uniformity in the Bodies of Men : For whatever difference there may be in some particular Laws, 'tis certain that as to the main and principal Branches of Morality, there never was any Nation upon*

*Earth,*

Earth, but owned that to Love and Honour God, to be grateful to Benefactors, to perform Equitable Compacts, to preserve the Lives of innocent and harmless Men, and the like ; were things fitter and better to be practised, than the contrary. In fine : This is that Law of Nature, which being founded in the eternal Reason of things, is as absolutely unalterable, as natural good and evil, as

\* Mathematical or Arithmetical Truths, as Light and Darkness, as Sweet and Bitter : The † Observation of Which, though no Man should commend it, would yet be truly commendable in it self : Which to suppose depending on the opinions of Men, and the customs of Nations ; that is, to suppose that What shall be accounted the Virtue of a Man depends merely on Imagination or Custom to determine ; is \* as absurd, as it would be to affirm that the Fruitfulness of a Tree, or the Strength of a Horse, depends merely on the Imagination of those who judge of it : In a word ; Which,

\* Nam ut vera & falsa, ut consequentia & contraria, sua sponte, non aliena, judicantur ; sic constans & perpetua ratio vitæ, quæ est virtus ; itemq; inconstantia, quod est vitium ; sua natura probatur. Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

† Quod vere dicimus, etiam si a nullo laudetur, laudabile esse natura. Cic. de Offic. lib. 1.

\* Hæc autem in opinione existimare, non in natura ponere, dementis est. Nam nec Arboris nec Equi virtus, quæ dicitur, in opinione sita est, sed in natura. Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

if

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if it had its original from the Authority of Men, and could be changed by

† Jam vero stultissimum illud, existimare omnia iusta esse, quæ scita sint in populorum institutis aut legibus. Etiamne siquæ sunt tyrannorum leges, si triginta illi *Athenis* leges imponere voluissent, aut si omnes *Athenienses* delectarentur tyrannicis legibus, num idcirco hæ leges iustæ haberentur? *Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.*

\* Quod si populorum iustis, si principum decretis, si sententiis iudicum, iura constituerentur; jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere, si hæc suffragiis aut scitis multitudinis probarentur. Quæ si tanta potentia est stultorum sententiis atq; iustis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura vertatur; cur non sanciant, ut quæ mala perniciosaq; sunt, habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus? aut cur, cum jus ex injuria lex facere possit, bonum eadem facere non possit ex malo? *Id. ibid.*

it; then † *all the commands of the cruellest and most barbarous Tyrants in the World, would be as just and equitable, as the wisest laws that ever were made; and \* to murder Men without distinction, to confound all families with Rapes and Adulteries, to rob with unrestrained Violence, to break Faith continually, and defraud and cheat without reluctance, might by the decrees and ordinances of a mad Assembly be made lawful and honest; In which matters if any Man thinks that the Votes and Suffrages of Fools have such Power, as to be able to change the Nature of Things; why do they not likewise decree (as Cicero admirably expresses himself,)*

*that poisonous things may become wholesome; and that any other thing, which is now destructive of Mankind, may become preservative of it?*

6. Further



6. Further yet : As this Law of Nature is infinitely superior to all Authority of Men, and independent upon it ; so its obligation, primarily and originally, is \* antecedent also even to this Consideration, of its being the positive Will or Command of God himself. For, † as the Addition of certain Numbers, necessarily produces a certain Sum ; and certain Geometrical or Mechanical Operations, give a constant and unalterable Solution of certain Problems or Propositions ; so in moral Matters, there are certain necessary and unalterable respects or relations of Things, which have not their Original from arbitrary and positive constitution, but are of eternal necessity in their own Nature. For Example, \* As in Matters of Sense,

Eternal moral Obligations, antecedent in some respect, even to this consideration, of their being the Will or Command of God himself.

\* Virtutis & Vitiū, sine ulla Divina ratione, grave in-  
fius conscientie pondus est.  
Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 3.

† Deniq, nequis obligati-  
onem Legum naturalium,  
arbitrariam & mutabilem a  
nobis fingi suspiceretur ; hoc  
adijciendum censui ; Virtu-  
tam exercitium, habere ra-  
tionem medii necessarij ad  
finem, (seposita considerati-  
one Imperij Divini,) manen-  
te rerum natura tali qualis  
nunc est. Hoc autem ita in-  
telligo, uti agnoscunt pleriq,  
omnes, Additionem duarum  
unitatum duabus prius positis  
necessario constituere nume-  
rum quaternarium : aut uti  
praxes geometricæ & mecha-  
nicæ, problemata proposita  
solvunt immutabiliter ; a-  
deo ut nec sapientia nec vo-  
luntas Divina cogitari possit  
cuicquam in contrarium con-  
stituere posse. Cumberland.  
de Legib. Naturæ pag. 231.

\* Τὸ δὲ ὁρίσασθαι, ἔστι δὲ  
ῥῶτον γὰρ ὅτι, διὰ τὸ το  
ῥῶτον γὰρ ὁρίσασθαι. (Note  
these Words are by Ficinus ridiculously translated, videtur and vi-  
sum est.) Οὐκ ἔν χὲ τὸ ὁρίσασθαι, διότι ὁρίσασθαι, εἰλεῖται τὸ δὲ ὁρίσασθαι  
ἔστι ὅτι φιλεῖται, διὰ τὸ το ὁρίσασθαι. Plato in Euthyphr.

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*the reason why a thing is Visible, is not because 'tis Seen; but it is therefore Seen, because 'tis Visible: So in matters of natural Reason and Morality, that which is Holy and Good (as Creatures depending upon and Worshipping God, and practising Justice and Equity one with another, and the like,) is not therefore Holy and Good, because it is commanded to be done; but is therefore commanded by God, because it is Holy and Good. The Existence indeed of the Things themselves, whose proportions and relations we consider, depend entirely on the mere arbitrary Will and good Pleasure of God; who can create things when he pleases, and destroy them again whenever he thinks fit: But when things are Created, and so long as it pleases God to continue them in Being; their Proportions, which are abstractly of Eternal Necessity, are also in the Things themselves absolutely unalterable. Hence God himself, though he has no Superior, from whose Will to receive any Law of his Actions; yet disdains not to*

*observe the Rule of Equity and Goodness, as || the Law of all his Actions in the Government of the World;*

|| Καὶ ἡμᾶς ὅς ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ τῶν μακαρίων πάντων ὥστε καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν. Origen. *Advers. Celsum. lib. 4.*

World ; and condescends to appeal even *Ezek. 18.*  
to Men, for the Equity and Righteousness  
of his Judgments: To *this Law*, the in-  
finite Perfections of his Divine Nature  
make it necessary for him (as has been †† *pag. 61.*  
before proved) to have constant regard ;

And (as a learned Prelate  
of our own \* has excellent-  
ly shown,) not barely his  
infinite Power, but the  
~~the~~ Rules of this eternal  
Law, are the true Founda-  
tion and the Measure of  
his Dominion over his  
Creatures. Now for the  
same Reason that *God*,  
who hath no *Superiour Will*

\* *Distamina Divini Intel-  
lectus sancuntur in Leges  
apud ipsum valituras, per im-  
mutabilitatem suarum per-  
fectionum. Cumberland de  
Leg. Naturæ. pag. 343.*

Solebam ipse quidem, cum  
a iis plurimis, antequam do-  
mini jurisq; omnis originem  
universaliter & distincte con-  
siderassem, *dominium Dei*, in  
*Creationem* velut integram  
ejus originem, resolvere. Ve-  
rum quoniam, &c. — in  
hanc tandem concessi sen-  
tentiam, *dominium Dei esse*

jus vel potestatem ei a sua Sapientia & Bonitate, velut a *Lege*, da-  
tum ad regimen eorum omnium quæ ab ipso unquam creata fuerint  
vel creabuntur. — Nec poterit quisquam merito conqueri, domi-  
nium dei intra nimis *angustos limites* hac explicatione coerceri :  
qua hoc unum dicitur, illius nullam partem consistere in potestate  
quicquam faciendi contra finem optimum, Bonum commune. *Idem*  
*pag. 345, 346.*

Contra autem, *Hobbiana* resolutio *dominii Divini* in *potentiam ejus*  
*irresistibilem*, adeo aperte ducit ad, &c. — ut mihi dubium non  
sit, illud ab eo fictum fuisse, Deoque attributum, in eum tantum  
finem, ut juri suo omnium in omnia patrocineretur. *Id. pag. 344.*

Nos e contrario, fontem indicavimus, e quo demonstrari potest,  
Justitiam universalem, omnemq; adeo Virtutem moralem, quæ in  
Rectore requiritur, in *Deo* præ cæteris retulgerere, *eadem plane*  
*methodo*, qua homines ad eas excolendas obligari ostendemus. *Id.*  
*pag. 347.*



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at all to determine him, yet constantly directs all his own Actions by the eternal Rule of Justice and Goodness; 'tis evident all *Intelligent Creatures* in their several Spheres and Proportions, *ought* to obey the same Rule according to the Law of their Nature; even though it could be supposed separate from that additional obligation, of its being the positive Will and Command of God. And doubtless there have been many Men in all Ages in many parts of the heathen World, who without having Philosophy enough to collect from mere Nature any tolerably just and explicit apprehensions concerning the *Attributes of God*; much less having been able to deduce from thence, any clear and certain knowledge of his *Will*; have yet had a very great sense of *Right* and *Truth*, and been fully perswaded in their own Minds of many unalterable Obligations of *Morality*. But this Speculation, tho' necessary to be taken notice of in the distinct Order and Method of Discourse, is in it self too dry, and not of great use to *Us*, who are abundantly assured that all moral Obligations are moreover the plain and declared Will of God; As shall be shown particularly, in its proper place.

7. Lastly,

7. Lastly, *This Law of Nature* has its full obligatory Power, antecedent to all Consideration of any particular private and personal *Reward or Punishment*, annexed either by natural Consequence, or by positive Appointment, to the Observance or Neglect of it. This also is very evident: Because if Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Fitness and Unfitness of being practised, be (as has been shown) originally, eternally, and necessarily, in the nature of the Things themselves; 'tis plain that the view of *particular Rewards or Punishments*, which is only an after-consideration, and does not at all alter the nature of Things, cannot be the original cause of the Obligation of the Law, but is only an additional weight to enforce the practise of what Men were before obliged to by right reason. There is no Man, who has any just sense of the difference between Good and Evil, but must needs acknowledge, that Virtue and Goodness \* are truly amiable, and to be chosen for their own sakes and intrinsic worth; though a Man had no prospect of gaining any particular Ad-

*The Law of Nature obligatory, antecedent to all consideration of particular Rewards and Punishments.*

\* Dignæ itaq; sunt, quæ propter intrinsicam sibi perfectionem appetantur, etiam si nulla esset naturæ Lex, quæ illas imperaret. *Cum-berland. de Leg. Nat. pag. 281.*

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vantage to himself, by the practise of them: And that on the contrary, Cruelty, Violence and Oppression, Fraud, Injustice, and all manner of Wickedness, are of themselves hateful, and by all means to be avoided; even though a Man had absolute assurance, that he should bring no manner of Inconvenience upon Himself, by the Commission of any or all of these Crimes. This likewise is excellently and admirably ex-

† Honestum id intelligimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate, sine ullis premiis fructibusque, per seipsum possit jure laudari. *Cic. de Finib. lib. 2.*

Atq; hæc omnia propter se solum, ut nihil adjungatur emolumentum, petenda sunt. *Id. de Inventione lib. 2.*

Nihil est de quo minus dubitari possit, quam & honesta expetenda per se, & eodem modo turpia per se esse fugienda. *Id. de Finib. lib. 3.*

\* Jus, & omne honestum, sua sponte est expetendum. Etenim omnes viri boni, ipsam aequitatem & jus ipsum amant. *Id. de Legib. lib. 1.*

Optimi quiq; permulta ob eam unam causam faci-

unt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est; etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. *Id. de Finib. lib. 2.*

pressed by Cicero. *Virtue, saith † he, is that, which, though no profit or advantage whatsoever, was to be expected to a Man's self from the practise of it, yet must without all controversy be acknowledged to be truly desirable for its own sake alone: And accordingly \* all good Men love Right and Equity; and do many things without any prospect of Advantage at all, merely because they are just and right and fit to be done.*

On



On the contrary, *Vice is so odious in its own Nature, and so fit to be avoided, even though no Punishment was to ensue ;*

*that || no Man, who has made any tolerable proficiency in moral Philosophy, can in the least doubt, but that, if he was sure the thing could be for ever concealed entirely both from God and Men, so that there should not be the least suspicion of its being ever discovered ; yet he Ought not to do any thing unjustly, covetously, lustfully, or any way wickedly : Nay, † if a good Man had it in his Power to gain all his Neighbours Wealth by the least Motion of his Finger, and was sure it would never be at all suspected either by God or Man ; unquestionably he would think he ought not to do it : And*

*whoever wonders at this, has no Notion what it is to be really a good Man. Not*

*\* that any such thing is possible in Na-*

|| Satis enim nobis, (si modo aliquid in philosophia profecimus,) persuasum esse debet, si omnes deos hominesq; celare possumus, nihil tamen avaræ, nihil injuste, nihil libidinosæ, nihil incontinententer esse faciendum. *Id. de Offic. lib. 3.*

Si nemo sciturus, nemo ne suspicaturus quidem sit, quum aliquid divitiarum, potentiæ, dominationis, libidinis causa feceris ; si id diis hominibusq; futurum sit semper ignotum, siquæ facturus ? *Id. ibid.*

† Itaq; si vir bonus habeat hanc vim ; ut, si digitis concrepuerit, possit in locupletum testamenta nomen ejus irrepere ; hac vi non utatur, ne si exploratum quidem habeat id omnino neminem unquam suspicaturum. — Hoc qui admiratur, is se, quis sit vir bonus, nescire fatetur. *Idem de Offic. lib. 3.*

ὁ θεὸς καὶ ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ὅπως δοτέον ἐστὶ τῷ λόγῳ ἵνα αὐτὴ δικαιοσύνη πρὸς ἀδικίαν αὐτῷ κρείσσῃ. *Plato de Republ. lib. 10.*

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ture, that any Wickedness can be indeed concealed from God ; but only upon such a Supposition, the natural and necessary difference between Justice and Injustice, is made to appear more clearly and undeniably in the Comparison.

*Yet it does not from thence at all follow, either that a good Man ought to have no respect to Rewards and Punishments, or that Rewards and Punishments are not absolutely necessary to maintain the practise of Virtue and Righteousness in this present World. 'Tis certain indeed, that Virtue and Vice are eternally and necessarily different ; and that the one truly deserves to be chosen for its own sake, and the other ought by all means to be avoided, though a Man was sure for his own particular, neither to gain nor lose any thing by the practise of either. And if this was truly the state of Things in the World ; certainly that Man must have a very corrupt Mind indeed, who could in the least doubt, or so much as once deliberate with himself, which he would choose. But the Case does not stand thus. The Question Now in the general practise of the World, supposing all expectation of Rewards and Punishments set aside, will*

will not be whether a Man would choose Virtue for *its own sake*, and avoid Vice; but the practise of Vice is accompanied with great Temptations and Allurements of Pleasure and Profit; and the practise of Virtue is often threatned with great Calamities, Losses, and sometimes even with Death it self: And this alters the Question, and destroys the practise of that which appears so reasonable in the whole Speculation; and introduces a necessity of Rewards and Punishments. For though Virtue is unquestionably *worthy to be chosen for its own sake*, even without any expectation of Reward; yet it does not follow that it is therefore entirely *Self-sufficient*, and able to support a Man under all kinds of Sufferings, and even Death it self, for its sake; without any prospect of future recompense. Here therefore began the Error of the *Stoicks*; who taught that the bare practise of Virtue, was it self the chief Good, and able of it self to make a Man happy under all the Calamities in the World. Their defense indeed of the cause of Virtue, was very brave: They saw well that its excellency was intrinsic, and founded in the Nature of the Things themselves, and could not be altered by any outward Circumstances;



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That therefore Virtue must needs be desirable for its own sake, and not merely for the Advantage it might bring along with it ; And if so, then consequently neither could any external Disadvantage, which it might happen to be attended with, change the intrinsic worth of the Thing it self, or ever make it cease to be truly desirable : Wherefore, in the case of Sufferings and Death for the sake of Virtue ; not having any *certain* knowledge of a future State of Reward, (though the wisest of them did indeed hope for it and think it highly *probable* ; ) they were forced, that they might be consistent with their own Principles, to suppose the practise of Virtue a sufficient Reward to it self in all cases, and a full compensation for all the Sufferings in the World : And accordingly they very bravely indeed taught, that the practise of Virtue was not only \* infinitely to be

\* Est autem unus dies bene & ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati anteponendus. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst.* l. 5.

† Quæro si duo sint, [quorum alter optimus vir, æquissimus, summa justitia, singulari fide ; alter insigni scelere & audacia : Et si in

preferred before all the sinful Pleasures in the World ; but also † that a Man ought without Scruple to chuse, if the case was proposed to him, rather to undergo all possible sufferings

ings with Virtue, than to obtain all possible worldly happiness by Sin: And the suitable Practise of some few of them, as of *Regulus* for instance, who chose to die the cruellest Death that could be invented, rather than break his Faith with an Enemy; is indeed very wonderful and to be admired. But yet, after all this, 'tis plain that the general Practise of Virtue in the World, can never be supported upon this Foot. The Discourse is admirable; but it seldom goes further than mere words: And the Practise of those few who have acted accordingly, has not been imitated by the rest of the World. Men never will generally, and indeed it is not very reasonably to be expected they should, part with all the Comforts of Life, and even Life it self; without expectation of any future recompense. So that, if we suppose no future State of Reward, it will follow that God has endued Men with such

eo sit errore civitas, ut bonum illum virum, scelertum, facinorosum, nefarium putet; contra autem qui sit improbissimus, existimet esse summa probitate ac fide: proq; hac opinione omnium civium, bonus ille vir vexetur, rapiatur, manus ei deniq; auferantur, effodiantur oculi, damnetur, vinciatur, uratur, exterminetur, egeat; postremo, jure etiam optimo omnibus miserimus esse videatur; contra autem, ille improbus laudetur, colatur, ab omnibus diligatur, omnes ad eum honores, omnia imperia, omnes opes, omnes deniq; copiae conferantur, vir deniq; optimus omnium aestimatione, & dignissimus omni fortuna judicetur: Quis tandem erit tam demens, qui dubitet utrum se esse malit. *Idem de Republ. lib. 3. fragment.*

Faculties, as put them under a necessity of approving and choosing Virtue in the judgment of their own Minds ; and yet has not given them wherewith to support themselves in the suitable and constant Practise of it. The Consideration of which inexplicable Difficulty, ought to have led the Philosophers to a firm belief and expectation of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, without which their whole Scheme of Morality cannot be supported ; And, because a thing of such necessity and importance to Mankind, was not more clearly and directly and universally made known ; it ought to have led them to some farther Consequences also, which I shall have occasion particularly to deduce hereafter.

*The manifold Absurdities of Mr Hobbs's Doctrines concerning the original of Right, shown in particular.*

And now from what has been said upon this Head, it is easy to see the Falsity and Weakness of Mr Hobbs's Doctrines ; That *there is no such thing as Just and Unjust, Right and Wrong, originally in the Nature of Things ; That Men in their natural State, antecedent to all Compacts, are not obliged to universal Benevolence, nor to any moral Duty whatsoever ; but are in a state of War, and have*

*every*



every one a Right to do whatever he has Power to do; And that, in Civil Societies, it depends wholly upon positive Laws or the Will of Governours, to define what shall be Just or Unjust. The Contrary to all which, having been already fully demonstrated; there is no need of being large, in further disproving and confuting particularly these Assertions themselves. I shall therefore only mention a few Observations, from which some of the greatest and most obvious Absurdities of the chief Principles upon which Mr Hobbs builds his whole Doctrine in this matter, may most easily appear.

I. First then, the Ground and Foundation of Mr Hobbs's Scheme, is this;

that \* *All Men being equal*

*by Nature, and naturally desiring the same things, have*

† *every one a Right to every*

*Thing; are every one desirous*

*to have absolute Dominion o-*

*ver all Others; and may eve-*

*ry one Justly do whatever at*

*any time is in his Power,*

*by violently taking from*

*Others either their Possessi-*

*ons or Lives, to gain to himself that*

\* Ab æqualitate Naturæ oritur unicuique ea, quæ cupit, acquirendi Spes. *Leviath. c. 13.*

† Natura dedit unicuique jus in omnia. Hoc est, in statu mere naturali, sive antequam homines ullis pactis sese invicem obstrinxissent, unicuique licebat facere quæcumque, & in quoscunque libebat, & possidere, uti, frui Omnibusquæ volebat & poterat. *de Cive. c. 1. § 10.*

*absolute*

*absolute Dominion.* Now this is exactly the same thing, as if a Man should affirm, that a *Part* is equal to the *Whole*, or that *one Body* can be present in a *Thousand places at once*. For, to say that one Man has a *full Right* to the same individual things, that another Man at the same time has also a *full Right* to; is saying that two *Rights* may be

¶ Si impossibile fit singulis, omnes & omnia subire; ratio quæ hunc finem proponit singulis, qui uni tantum contingere potest, sapius quam millies proponeret impossibile; & semel tantum possibile. *Cumberl. de Leg. Nat. pag. 217.*

\* Nec potest cujusquam jus seu libertas ab ulla lege relicta, eo extendere, ut liceat oppugnare ea, quæ aliis eadem Lege imperantur facienda. *Id. pag. 219.*

|| contradictory to each other; that is, that a thing may be *Right*, at the same time that it is confessed to be *Wrong*. For Example; if every Man has a *Right* to preserve his own Life, then \* 'tis manifest I can have no *Right* to take any Man's Life away from him, unless he has first forfeited his *own Right*, by attempting to deprive me of mine.

For otherwise, it might be *Right* for me to do That, which at the same time because it could not be done but in breach of another Mans *Right*, it could not be *Right* for me to do; Which is the greatest Absurdity in the World. The true State of this Case therefore, is plainly this: In Mr *Hobbs's* State of

Nature and Equality, every Man having an *equal* right to preserve his own Life, 'tis evident has a right to an *equal* proportion of all those things, which are either necessary or useful to Life: And consequently so far is it from being true, that any one has an original right to possess *All*, that on the contrary, whoever first attempts, without the *consent* of his Fellows, and except it be for some *publick Benefit*, to take to himself more than his *Proportion*, is the beginner of Iniquity, and the Author of all succeeding Mischief.

2. To avoid this Absurdity therefore, *Mr Hobbs* is forced to assert in the next place, that since every Man has confessedly a Right to preserve his own Life, and consequently to do every thing that is necessary to preserve it; and in the State of Nature, Men will

necessarily have † perpetual jealousies and suspicions of each others *Incroaching*; therefore just *Precaution* gives every one a Right to \* endeavour for his own Security to prevent, oppress, and destroy all others, either by secret Artifice or open Violence, as

† Omnium adversus omnes, perpetuæ Suspiciones. — Bellum omnium in Omnes. *de Cive* c. 1. § 12.

\* Spes unicuiq; securitatis conservationisq; suæ in eo sita est, ut viribus artibusq; propriis proximum suum vel palam vel ex insidiis præoccupare possit. *ibid.* c. 5. § 1.



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*it shall happen at any time to be in his Power ; as being the || only cer-*

|| *Securitatis viam meliorem habet nemo Anticipatione. Leviath. c. 13.*

*tain Means of Self-preservation. But this is even a greater Absurdity,*

*if possible, than the former. For, (besides that, according to Mr Hobbs's Principles, Men, before positive Compacts, may justly do what mischief they please, even without the pretense of Self-preservation;) what can be more ridiculous, than to imagine a War of All Men against All, the directest and certainest means of the Preservation of all? Yes, says he, because it leads Men to a necessity of entering into Compacts for each others security. But then, to make these Compacts obligatory, he is forced (as I shall presently observe more particularly) to recur to an † Antecedent Law of Nature. And this destroys all that he had before said. For the same Law of Nature, which obliges Men to Fidelity after having made a Compact; will unavoidably, upon all the same accounts, be found to oblige them, before all Compacts, to Contentment and mutual Benevolence, as the readiest and certainest means to the preservation and Happiness of them All. 'Tis true; Men by entering into Compacts and making Laws,*

† See de Cive, c. 3. § 1.

agree

agree to Compell one another to do what perhaps the mere sense of Duty, however really obligatory in the highest degree, would not, without such Compacts, have force enough of it self to hold them to in Practise : And so Compacts must be acknowledged to be *in fact* a great Addition and Strengthening of Mens Security. But this Compulsion makes no alteration in the *Obligation it self* : And only shows, that That *entirely lawless* State, which Mr *Hobbs* calls the *State of Nature*, is by no means truly *Natural*, or in any sense suitable to the Nature and Faculties of Man ; but on the contrary, is a State of extremely *unnatural and Intolerable Corruption* ; As I shall presently prove more fully from some other Considerations.

3. Another notorious Absurdity and Inconsistency in Mr *Hobbs's* Scheme, is this : That he all along supposes some particular Branches of the Law of Nature, (which he thinks necessary for the Foundation of some parts of his own Doctrine,) to be originally obligatory from the bare reason of Things ; at the same time that he denies and takes away innumerable others, which have plainly in the nature and reason of things, the same foundation of being obligato-

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ry as the former, and without which the obligation of the former can never be solidly made out and defended. Thus, he supposes that in the State of Nature, before any Compact be made,

\* Unicuiq; licebat facere quæcunq; libebat. *De Cive*, c. 1. § 10.

† Consequens est, ut Nihil dicendum sit Injustum. Nomina Justi & Injusti, locum in hac conditione non habent. *Leviath. c. 13.*

|| Ex his sequitur, Injuriam nemini fieri posse, nisi ei quocum initur pactum.

— Siquis alicui noceat, quocum nihil pactus est, damnum ei infert, non Injuriam. — Etenim si is qui damnum recipit, injuriam expostularet; is qui fecit sic diceret, *quid tu mihi? quare facerem ego tuo potius, quam meo libitu?* &c. In qua oratione, ubi nulla intercesserunt pacta, non video quid sit quod possit reprehendi. *de Cive*, c. 3. § 4.

nion :) And yet at the same time he supposes, that in the same State of Nature, Men are by all means obliged

\* Prima & fundamentalis Lex Naturæ est, quarendam esse pacem, ubi haberi potest, &c. *De Cive*, c. 2. § 2.

† See *de Cive*, cap. 2. § 2.

every \* *Mans own Will is his only Law*; that † *nothing a Man can do is Unjust*; and that, || *whatever Mischief one Man does to another, is no Injury nor Injustice; neither has the Person, to whom the Mischief is done, how great soever it be, any just reason to complain of Wrong*; (I think it may here reasonably be presumed, that if Mr *Hobbs* had lived in such a State of Nature, and had happened to be himself the Suffering Party, he would in this case have been of another Opi-

nion :) And yet at the same time he supposes, that in the same State of Nature, Men are by all means obliged \* *to seek Peace*, and † *to enter into Compacts* to remedy the fore-mentioned Mischiefs. Now if Men are obliged

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obliged by the original reason and nature of Things, to *seek terms of Peace*, and *get out of the pretended natural State of War*, as soon as they can; how come they not to be obliged originally by the same reason and nature of things, to live from the beginning in *universal Benevolence*, and *avoid entering into the State of War at all*? He must needs confess they would be obliged to do so, did not *Self-preservation* necessitate them every Man to War upon others: But this cannot be true of the *first Aggressor*; Whom yet Mr *Hobbs* in the || place now cited, vindicates from being guilty of any Injustice: And therefore herein he unavoidably contradicts himself. Thus again: In *most* instances of Morality, he supposes *Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust*, to have no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but to depend entirely on positive Laws; that \* *the Rules or*

|| Ex his sequitur, Injuriam nemini fieri posse, &c.

\* *Regulas boni & mali, justi & injusti, honesti & inhonesti, esse leges civiles; ideoque quod legislator præceperit, id pro bono; quod veruerit, id pro malo habendum esse. De Cive, c. 12. § 1.*

Quod Actio justa vel injusta sit, a jure imperantis provenit. Reges legitimi quæ imperant, justa faciunt imperando; quæ verant, verando faciunt injusta. *de Cive, c. 12. § 1.* [In which Section 'tis worth observing, how he ridiculously interprets those words of *Salomon*, *Dabis servo tuo cor docile, ut possit Discernere inter bonum & malum*, to signify, not his *understanding* or *discerning*, but his *decreeing* what shall be good and what evil.]

*Distin-*

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*Distinctions of Good and Evil, Honest and Dishonest, are mere civil Constitutions ; and whatever the Chief Magistrate Commands, is to be accounted Good ; what-*

† Si tamen Lex civilis iubeat invadere aliquid, non est illud *Furtum, Adulterium, &c.* *De Cive, c. 14. § 10.*

|| Sequitur, ergo legibus illis, non *Occides, non Machabere, non Furabere, Parentes honorabis, nihil aliud præcepisse Christum, quam ut cives & subditi suis Principibus & summis Imperatoribus in quæstionibus omnibus circa meum, tuum, suum, alienum, absolute obedirent.* *de Cive, c. 17. § 10.*

\* Si quærat<sup>r</sup> an obediendum civitati sit, si impetur Deum colere sub *Imagine*, coram iis qui id fieri honorificum esse putant ; Certe faciendum est. *de Cive, c. 15. § 18.*

*ever he forbids, Evil ; that 'tis the Law of the Land only, which makes Robbery to be Robbery, or Adultery to be Adultery ; that || the Commandments, to Honour our Parents, To do no Murder, Not to commit Adultery, and all the other Laws of God and Nature, are no further obligatory, than the Civil Power shall think fit to make them so ; nay, that where the Supreme Authority commands Men to Worship God by an Image or Idol, in Heathen Countries (for in this Instance he cautiously ex-*

*cepts Christian ones) it is lawful and their Duty to do it ; and (agreeably as a natural Consequence to all This ;) that † 'tis*

† *Universiter & in omnibus obedire obligamur.* *de Cive, c. 14. § 10.*

*Doctrina alia, quæ Obedientiæ civili repugnat est, quicquid faciat Civis quicumq; contra Conscientiam suam, peccatum esse.* *Leviath. c. 29.*

*Opinio eorum qui docent, peccare subditos, quoties mandata Principum suorum, quæ sibi iniusta videntur esse, exsequuntur, & erronea est, & inter eas numeranda quæ obedientiæ civili adversantur.* *de Cive, c. 12. § 2.*

the Civil Power in all things, even in things clearly and directly against their Conscience; (that is, that 'tis their positive Duty to do That, which at the same time they know plainly it is their Duty not to do;) \* Keeping up indeed

always in their own Minds, an inward desire to observe the Laws of Nature and Conscience; but not being bound to observe them in

their outward Actions, except when it is safe so to do: (He might as well have said, that Humane Laws and Constitutions

have || Power to make Light be Darkness, and Darkness Light; to make Sweet be Bitter and Bitter Sweet; And indeed, as one Absurdity will naturally lead a Man into another, he does say something very

like it; namely, that † the Civil Authority is to judge of the Truth of all Opinions † de Cive, c. 6. § 11.

and Doctrines whatsoever; to \* determine \* ibid. c.

Questions Philosophical, Mathematical, and, 17. § 12.

because indeed the signification of Words is arbitrary, even || Arithmetical || ibid. c. 18.

ones also, as whether a Man shall presume § 4. to affirm that Two and Three make Five

\* Concludendum est, Legem Naturæ semper & ubiq; obligare in Foro interno, sive conscientia; non semper in Foro externo; sed tum solummodo, cum secure id fieri possit. de Cive. c. 3.

|| Quæ si tanta potentia est stultorum sententiis atq; jussis, ut eorum Suffragiis rerum natura vertatur; cur non sanciant, ut quæ mala perniciosaq; sunt, habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus? Cicero de Legib. lib. 1.



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or not.) And yet at the same time, some particular Things, which it would either have been too flagrantly scandalous for him to have made depending

\* Neq; enim an honorifice de Deo sentiendum sit, neq; an sit amandus, timendus, colendus, dubitari potest. Sunt enim hæc Religionum per omnes gentes communia. *De Homine cap. 14.*

\* Si is qui summum habet imperium, seipsum, imperantem dico, interficere alicui imperet; non tenetur. Neq; Parentem &c cum filius mori quam vivere infamis atq; exosus malit. Et alii casus sunt, cum mandata factu inhonestasunt, &c. *de Cive, c. 6. §. 13.*

|| Lex naturalis est *Passi* standum esse, sive Fidem observandam esse. *de Cive, c. 3. §. 1.*

† Lex naturalis omnes leges civiles jubet observari. *ibid. c. 14. §. 10.*

\* Legem Civilem, quæ non sit lata in contumeliam Dei (*cujus respectu ipsa Civitates non sunt sui juris, nec dicuntur leges ferre*) &c. *de Cive, c. 14. §. 10.*

*Passi* violatio &c. See *de Cive, c. 3. §. 3.*

strongest of

upon Humane Laws; as that † God is to be Loved, Honoured and Adored; that \* a Man ought not to Murder his Parents; and the like: Or else, which were of Necessity to be supposed for the Foundation of his own Scheme; as that || *Compacts ought to be faithfully performed, and Obedience † to be duly paid to Civil Powers; The Obligation of These Things, he is forced to deduce intirely from the internal Reason and Fitness of the Things themselves; \* antecedent to, independent upon, and unalterable by, all Humane Constitutions whatsoever. In which Matter, he is guilty of the grossest Absurdity and Inconsistency that can be. For if those greatest and all our Obligations; to Love*

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*Love and Honour God*, for instance ; or, *to perform Compacts faithfully* ; depend not at all on any Humane Constitution, but must of necessity (to avoid making Obligations reciprocally depend on each other in a Circle) be confessed to arise originally from, and be founded in, the eternal Reason and unalterable Nature and Relations of Things themselves ; and the nature and force of these Obligations is sufficiently clear and evident ; so that he who † *Dishonours*

† See *de Cive* c. 14, § 10.

*God*, or \* *wilfully breaks his Faith*, is (according to *Mr Hobbs's* own reasoning) guilty of as great an Absurdity in *Practise*, and of as plainly contradicting the right Reason of his own Mind, as he who in a *Dispute* is reduced to a necessity of asserting something inconsistent with it self ; And the original Obligation to These Duties, can from hence only be distinctly deduced : Then for the same reason, all the other Duties likewise of natural Religion ; such

\* Est Similitudo quædam inter id, quod in vita communi vocatur *Injuria* ; & id, quod in Scholis solet appellari *Absurdum*. Quæmadmodum enim is, qui argumentis cogitur ad negationem assertionis quam prius asseruerat, dicitur redigi ad *Absurdum* : eodem modo is, qui præ animi impotentia facit vel omittit id quod se non facturum vel non omisurum pacto suo ante promiserat, *Injuriam* facit : neq; minus in contradictionem incidit, quam qui in Scholis reducitur ad *Absurdum*. — Est itaq; *Injuria*, *Absurditas* quædam in conversatione ; sicut *Absurditas*, *Injuria* quædam est in disputatione. *De Cive*, c. 3. § 3.

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as *universal Benevolence, Justice, Equity, and the like*; which I have before proved to receive in like manner their *Power of obliging*, from the eternal Reason and Relations of Things; must needs be obligatory, antecedent to any consideration of *positive Compact*, and unalterably and independently on all *Humane Constitutions* whatsoever: And consequently, Mr *Hobbs's* whole Scheme; both of a State of Nature at first, wherein there was no such thing as Right or Wrong, Just or Unjust, at all; and of these things depending afterwards, by virtue of Compact, wholly and absolutely on the positive and arbitrary determination of the Civil Power; falls entirely to the Ground. On the contrary: If the Rules of Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, have (as Mr *Hobbs* teaches) no obligatory force in the State of Nature, *antecedent* to positive Compact; Then for the same Reason, neither will they be of any force *after* the Compact, so as to afford Men any certain and real Security; (Excepting only what may arise from the *Compulsion of Laws, and Fear of Punishment*; which therefore it may well be supposed



fed is all that Mr *Hobbs* really means at the bottom :) For if there be no Obligation of *Just* and *Right*, antecedent to the *Compact*; then Whence arises the Obligation of the *Compact it self*, on which he supposes all other Obligations to be founded? If, *before* any *Compact* was made, it was no Injustice for a Man to take away the Life of his Neighbour, not for his own Preservation, but merely to satisfy an † arbitrary humour or pleasure, and without any reason or provocation at all; How comes it to be an Injustice, *after* he has made a *Compact*, to break and neglect it? Or what is it that makes *breaking ones Word*, to be a greater and more unnatural Crime, than *Killing a Man merely for no other reason, but because no positive Compact has been made to the contrary*? So that \* this way also, Mr *Hobbs's* whole Scheme is entirely destroyed.

4. That State, which Mr *Hobbs* calls the *State of Nature*, is not in any sense a Natural State, but a State

† Ex his sequitur, injuriam nemini fieri posse, nisi ei quocum inicitur pactum. de Cive, c. 3. § 4. [Which whole Section highly deserves to be read and well considered, as containing the Secret of Mr *Hobbs's* whole Scheme.]

\* Itaq; patet quod, si Hobbiana ratiocinatio esset valida, omnis simul Legum Civilium obligatio collaberetur; nec aliter fieri potest quin earum vis labefacteretur ab omnibus principiis, quæ Legum naturalium vim tollunt aut minuunt; quoniam in his fundatur & regiminis civilis auctoritas

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ac securitas, & legum a civitatibus latarum vigor. *Cum-berland. de Leg. Nat. pag. 303.*

Etiam extra regimen civile, a malis omnigenis simul consideratis tutior erit qui actibus externis Leges Naturæ constantissime observabit, quam qui, juxta doctrinam Hobbianam, vi aut insidiis alios omnes conando præoccupare, securitatem sibi quasiverit. *Id. pag. 304.*

† *pag. 92.*

rise but from extreme *Corruption*. A Man may sometimes, 'tis true, in his own Defense, be necessitated, in compliance with the Laws of Nature and Reason, to make War upon his Fellows : But the first Aggressours, who upon *Mr Hobbs's* principles, (that All

¶ *Voluntas ledendi*, omnibus inest in statu Naturæ. *de Cive, c. i. § 4.*

\* In statu naturali, unicuique licebat facere quacunq; & in quoscunq; libebat. *ibid. § 10.*

Men || have a natural *Will* to hurt each other, and that every one in the State of Nature has a \* *Right* to do whatever he has a *Will* to;) The first Aggressours, I say, who upon these principles assault and violently spoil as many as they are superiour to in Strength, without any regard to Equity or Proportion ; these can never, by any colour whatsoever, be excused from

of the greatest, most unnatural, and most intolerable *Corruption*, that can be imagined. For *Reason*, which is the proper Nature of Man, can never (as has been † before shown) lead Men to any thing else than *universal Love and Benevolence* : And *Wars, Hatred, and Violence*, can never a-

to hurt each other, and that every one in the State of Nature has a \* *Right* to do whatever he has a *Will* to;) The first Aggressours, I say, who upon

from having † *utterly de-vested themselves of Humane Nature*, and having || introduced into the World, contrary to all the Laws of Nature and Reason, the greatest Calamities and most unnatural Confusion, that Mankind by the highest Abuse of their natural Powers and Faculties, are capable of falling under.

Mr *Hobbs* pretends indeed, that one of the first and most natural principles of

human Life, is \* a Desire necessarily arising in every Mans mind, of having Power and Dominion over Others; and that This naturally impells Men to use Force and Violence to obtain it: But neither is it

true, that Men, following the dictates of Reason and uncorrupted nature, desire disproportionate Power and Dominion over others ; neither, if it was natural to desire such Power, would it at all follow that it was agreeable to Nature to use violent and hurtful means to obtain it. For

† Si nihil existimat contra naturam fieri, hominibus violandis; quid cum eo differas, qui omnino hominem ex homine rollat? *Cic. de Offic. lib. 3.*

|| Τὰ δὲ 3 δίκαια ἐδ' ἐστὶ  
τοπαρχία φύσις, --- γυγνώ-  
μενα πέφυκε καὶ τοῖς νόμοις,  
ἀλλ' ἐστὶν καὶ τινὶ φύσις, --- Φα-  
σκότων ἐστὶ τὸ δικαιοτάτον ὃ  
τι τις ἀνὴρ βιάζομενος.  
ὅθεν ἀστέβηται τε καὶ γαστεῖς,  
ὅσῳ λώβῳ ἀνδρώπων νέων  
δημοσίᾳ παλαιᾷ τε καὶ ἰδίῳις  
οἰκοῖς. Plato de Leg. lib. 10.

\* Homines Libertatis & Dominii per naturam amatores. Leviath. c. 17.

Nemini dubium esse debet, quin avidius ferrentur homines natura sua, si merus abesset, ad *Dominationem* quam ad *Societatem*, de *Cive*, c. 1. § 2.



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since the only natural and good reason to desire Power and Dominion (more than what is necessary for every Man's Self-preservation) is, that the possessor of such Power may have a larger compass and greater Abilities and Opportunities of doing Good, (as is evident from God's exercise of perfectly *Absolute Power*;) 'tis plain that no Man, obeying the uncorrupted Dictates of Nature and Reason, can desire to increase his Power by such destructive and pernicious Methods, which the Power it self is for *that only reason* truly desirable, that it may prevent and hinder from being practised among Men. All Violence therefore and War, are plainly the Effects, not of natural Desires, but of unnatural and extreme Corruption. And this Mr *Hobbs* himself unwarily proves against himself, by those very Arguments, whereby he indeavours to prove that War and Contention is more natural to *Men*, than to *Bees* or *Ants*. For his Arguments on this Head, are all drawn from Mens using themselves (as the Animals he is speaking of, cannot do.)

† Homi-  
nes inter se de Honoribus & Dignitatibus perpetuo contendunt; sed Animalia illa [Apes & Formicæ] non item. Itaq; inter Homines Invidia, Odium, Bellum, &c. *Leviath. c. 17.*

till

till the Contention grows up into Hatred,  
Seditions and Wars; to \*

separate each one his private  
Interest from the publick,  
and value himself highly above  
others, upon getting and en-  
grossing to himself more than  
his Proportion of the things of Life;

to || find fault with each o-  
thers management, and thro'  
Self-conceit bring in conti-  
nual Innovations and di-  
stractions; to † impose one  
upon another, by Lyes, falsify-  
ing and deceit, calling good  
evil, and evil good; to \*  
grow envious at the prosperi-  
ty of others, or proud and  
domineering when themselves  
are in ease and plenty; and  
|| to keep up tolerable Peace  
and Agreement among them-  
selves, merely by artificial  
Compacts and the compulsion  
of Laws. All which things,  
are so far from being tru-  
ly the Natural Effects and  
result of Mens Reason and  
other Faculties, that on the  
contrary they are evidently

\* Inter Animalia illa, Bo-  
num publicum & privatum  
idem est. ——— Homini  
autem in bonis propriis ni-  
hil tam jucundum est, quam  
quod alienis sunt majora. *ib.*

|| Animantia quæ rationem  
non habent, nullum defe-  
ctum vident, vel videre se  
putant, in administratione  
suarum rerum publicarum:  
Sed in multitudine Hominum  
plurimi sunt qui præ cæteris  
sapere existimantes, conan-  
tur res novare; & diversi no-  
vatores innovant diversis mo-  
dis, id quod est distractio  
& bellum civile. *de Cive, c.*  
*s. § 5.*

† Animantia illa verborum  
arte illa carent, qua homi-  
nes alii aliis videri faciunt  
Bonum Malum, & Malum  
Bonum; Magnum Parvum,  
& Parvum Magnum. *Levi-*  
*ath. c. 17.*

\* Animalia bruta, quam-  
diu bene sibi est, cæteris non  
invident: Homo autem tum  
maxime molestus est, quan-  
do otio opibusq; maxime  
abundat. *ibid.*

|| Consensu creaturarum  
illarum brutarum naturalis  
est; hominum pacticia tan-  
tum, id est artificiosa. *de*  
*Cive, c. 5 § 5.*

some

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some of the grossest Abuses and most unnatural Corruptions thereof, that any one who was arguing on the opposite side of the Question, could easily have chosen to have instanced in.

5. Lastly, That chief and principal Argument, which is one of the main Foundations of Mr *Hobbs's* and his Fol-

lowers System; namely, that † *Gods* irresistible Power is the *only Foundation* of his *Dominion*, and the *only measure* of his *Right* over his Creatures; and consequently, \* that every other Being has just so much *Right*, as it has *natural Power*; that is, that it is naturally *right* for every thing, to do whatever it has *Power* to do: This Argument, I say, is of all his others the most notoriously false and absurd. As may sufficiently appear! (besides what has been || already said, of *God's* other Perfections being † as much the measure of his *Right*, as his *Power* is; ) from

this single Consideration. Suppose the  
*Devil,*

† Regni Divini naturalis Jus derivatur ab eo, quod Divinae Potentiae resistere impossibile est. *Leviath. c. 31.*

In regno naturali, regnandi & puniendi eos qui leges suas violant, jus Deo est a sola potentia irresistibili. *De Cive, c. 15. § 5.*

Iis quorum Potentia resisti non potest, & per consequens Deo omnipotenti, jus Dominandi ab ipsa potentia derivatur. *ibid.*

\* Nam quoniam Deus jus ad omnia habet; & jus Dei nihil aliud est quam ipsa Dei potentia; hinc sequitur, unamquamq; rem naturalem tantum juris ex natura habere, quantum potentia habet. *Spinoz. de Monarch. cap. 2.* [See also *Treatat. Theolog. politic. cap. 16.*]

|| *Pag. 61 and 111.*

† See *Cumberland de Leg. Naturæ*, locis supra citatis.



*Devil*, (for when Men run into extreme impious assertions, they must be answered with suitable Suppositions ; ) Suppose, I say, such a Being as we conceive the *Devil* to be ; of extreme malice, cruelty, and iniquity ; was indued with supreme absolute Power, and made use of it only to render the World as miserable as was possible, in the most cruel, arbitrary and unequal manner that can be imagined : Would it not follow undeniably, upon Mr *Hobbs's* Scheme ; since *Dominion* is founded in *Power*, and *Power* is the measure of *Right*, and consequently *Absolute Power* gives *Absolute Right* ; that such a Government as this, would not only be as much of necessity indeed to be submitted to, but also that it would be as *Just* and *Right*, and \* *with* \* See Hobbs de Cive, c. 3. § 4. *as little reason to be complained of*, as is the present Government of the World in the Hands of the *Ever-Blessed and infinitely Good God*, whose Love and Goodness and tender Mercy appears every where over all his Works.

Here Mr *Hobbs*, as an unanswerable Argument in Defense of his Assertion, urges ; that † the only Reason, why Men are bound to obey *God*, is plainly nothing but *Weak-*

† Quod si jus regnandi habeat Deus ab Omnipotentia sua, manifestum est Obligationem ad præstandum ipsi obedientiam, incumbere  
ness

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bere hominibus propter imbecillitatem. [To explain which, he adds in his *Note*:] Si cui durum hoc videbitur, illum rogo ut tacita cogitatione considerare velit, si essent duo Omnipotentes uter utri obedire obligaretur. Confitebitur, credo, neutrum neutri obligari. Hoc si verum est, verum quoque est quod posui, homines ideo Deo subiectos esse, quia omnipotentes non sunt. de Cive, c. 15. § 7.

*ness* or *Want of Power*; because if they themselves were All-powerful, 'tis manifest they could not be under any Obligation to obey; and consequently *Power* would give them an undoubted *Right* to do what they pleased. That is: If Men were not created and dependent Beings,

'tis true they could not indeed be obliged to the Duty of created and dependent Beings, to obey the Will and Command of another in things *positive*: But from their Obligation to the Practice of *Moral* Virtues, of Justice, Righteousness, Equity, Holiness, Purity, Goodness, Beneficence, Faithfulness and Truth, from which Mr *Hobbs* fallaciously in this Argument, and most impiously in his whole Scheme, indeavours

\* Ut enim omittam vim & naturam Deorum; ne homines quidem censeris, nisi imbecilli essent, futuros beneficos & benignos fuisse. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

\* to discharge them; from this they could not be discharged by any addition of Power whatsoever; Because the obligation to

these things, is not, as the obligation to obey in things of *arbitrary and positive* Constitution, founded only in the Weakness

Weakness, Subjection, and Dependence of the *Persons* obliged ; but also and chiefly in the eternal and unchangeable Nature and Reason of the *Things* themselves : For these things are the Law of *God himself*, not only to his Creatures, but also as the Rule of all his own Actions in the Government of the World.

I have been the longer upon this Head, because *Moral Virtue* is the Foundation and the Summ, the Essence and the Life of all true Religion ; For the Security whereof, all positive Institution was only designed ; For the Restoration whereof, all revealed Religion was ultimately intended ; and inconsistent wherewith, or in opposition to it, all Doctrines whatsoever, supported by what Pretense of Reason or Authority soever, are as certainly and necessarily false, as *God* is true.

II. *Though these eternal moral Obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational Beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive Will and Command of God ; yet that which most strongly confirms, and in pra-*  
tise



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*Life most effectually and indispensably in-  
forces them upon us, is this; that both  
from the Perfections of God, and the Nature  
of Things, and from several other collateral  
considerations, it appears, that as God  
is himself necessarily Just and Good in  
the exercise of his infinite Power in the  
Government of the Whole World, so he can-  
not but likewise positively Require the  
same of all his rational Creatures in the  
exercise of each of their Powers in their se-  
veral and respective Spheres: That is; as  
these eternal moral Obligations are really  
in perpetual force, merely from their own  
nature and the abstract reason of Things;  
so also they are moreover the express and  
unalterable Will, Command and Law  
of God to his Creatures, which he cannot  
but expect should in obedience to his Su-  
preme Authority, as well as in compliance  
with the natural reason of Things, be re-  
gularly and constantly observed through the  
whole Creation.*

*That mo-  
ral Duties  
are the  
positive  
Will and  
Command  
of God,  
proved  
from the  
considera-  
tion of the  
Divine At-  
tributes.*

This Proposition is very evident, and  
has little need of being particularly pro-  
ved.

For 1<sup>st</sup>, the same Reasons which  
prove to us that God must of Necessity  
be himself infinitely Holy, and Just,  
and Good; manifestly prove that it

*must*

must likewise be his Will, that all his Creatures should be so also, according to the Proportions and Capacities of their several Natures. *That* there are eternal and necessary Differences of Things, Agreements and Disagreements, Proportions and Disproportions, Fitnesses and Unfitnesses of Things, absolutely in their own Nature; has been before largely demonstrated: *That* with Regard to these fixt and certain proportions and fitnesses of Things, the Will of God, which can neither be influenced by any external Power, nor imposed upon by any error or deceit, constantly and necessarily determines it self to choose always what in the whole is Best and Fittest to be done, according to the unalterable Rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth; has likewise been already proved: *That* the same considerations Ought also regularly to determine the Wills of all Subordinate rational Beings, to act in constant conformity to the same eternal Rules; has in like manner been shown before. It remains therefore only to prove, that these very same moral Rules, which are thus *of themselves* really obligatory, as being the necessary result

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sult of the unalterable reason and nature of Things ; are moreover the positive *Will and Command of God* to all rational Creatures : And consequently, that the wilful transgression or neglect of them, is as truly an insolent contempt of the Authority of God, as it is an absurd Confounding of the natural reasons and proportions of Things. Now This also plainly follows from what has been already laid down. For the same *absolute Perfection* of the Divine Nature, which (as has been before shown) makes us certain that God must *Himself* be of Necessity infinitely Holy, Just and Good ; makes it equally certain, that he cannot possibly approve Iniquity in *Others* : And the same *Beauty*, the same *Excellency*, the same *Weight and Importance* of the Rules of everlasting Righteousness, with regard to which God is always pleased to make those Rules the Measure of all his *Own* Actions ; prove it impossible but he must likewise Will and Desire, that all rational Creatures should proportionably make them the Measure of *Theirs*. Even among *Men*, there is no earthly Father, but in those things which he esteems his own Excellencies, desires



desires and expects to be imitated by his Children : How much more is it necessary that *God*, who is infinitely far from being subject to such Passions and Variableness as frail Men are, and has an infinitely tenderer and heartier concern for the Happiness of his Creatures, than mortal Man can have for the welfare of their Posterity ; must desire to be imitated by his Creatures in those Perfections, which are the foundation of his own unchangeable Happiness ? In the exercise of his Supreme *Power*, we cannot imitate him ; In the extent of his unerring *Knowledge*, we cannot attain to any Proportion of Similitude : We cannot at all *Thunder with a Voice like Him* ; nor are we able to search out and comprehend the least part of the depth of his unfathomable *Wisdom* : But his *Holiness* and *Goodness*, his *Justice*, *Righteousness* and *Truth* ; these things we *can* understand ; in these things we *can* imitate him ; nay, we cannot approve our selves to him as obedient Children, if we do not imitate him therein. If God be himself essentially of infinite *Holiness* and *Purity* ; (as, from the Light of Nature, 'tis of all things most manifest that he is ;)

Job 40, 9.

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it follows, that 'tis impossible but he  
 must likewise be of *purser Eyes than to*  
 behold with approbation any manner  
 of *Impurity* in his Creatures ; And  
 consequently it must needs be his Will,  
 that they should all (according to the  
 measure of their frail and finite Nature)  
 be *Holy as He is Holy*. If God is himself  
 a Being of infinite *Justice, Righteousness*  
 and *Truth* ; it must needs be his Will,  
 that all rational Creatures, whom he  
 has created after his own Image, to  
 whom he has communicated some resem-  
 blance of his Divine Perfections, and  
 whom he has endued with excellent  
 Powers and Faculties to enable them  
 to distinguish between Good and Evil ;  
 should imitate him in the exercise of  
 those glorious Attributes, by conform-  
 ing all their Actions to the eternal and  
 unalterable Law of Righteousness. If  
 God is himself a Being of infinite  
 Goodness ; making his Sun to rise on the  
 Evil and on the Good, and sending Rain  
 on the Just and on the Unjust ; having  
 never left himself wholly without Witness,  
 but always doing good, giving Men Rain  
 from Heaven and fruitful Seasons, and  
 filling their Hearts with Food and Glad-  
 ness : it cannot but be his Will, that all  
 reaso-

Hab. 1, 13.

Mat. 5, 45.

Acts 14,  
17.

reasonable Creatures should, by mutual Love and Benevolence, permit and assist each other to injoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness. Lastly, if God is himself a Being of infinite *Mercy* and *Compassion*; as 'tis plain he bears long with Men before he punishes them for their Wickedness, and often freely forgives them his *ten thousand Talents*: It must needs be his Will, that they should forgive one another their *hundred pence*; being *merciful* one to another, as he is *merciful* to them all; and *having Compassion* each on his *Fellow-Servants*, as God *has pity on Them*. Thus from the *Attributes* of God, natural Reason leads Men to the Knowledge of his *Will*: All the same Reasons and Arguments, which discover to Men the *natural Fittnesses* or *Unfittnesses* of *Things*, and the *necessary Perfections* or *Attributes* of *God*; proving equally at the same time, that  
 \* That which is truly the  
*Law of Nature, or the Rea-*

Mat. 18,

24. 18, 28.

Lu. 6. 36.

Mat. 11:

23.

\* Ita principem Legem  
 illam & ultimam, mentem esse  
 omnia ratione aut cogentis

aut vetantis Dei. Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

Quæ vis non modo senior est quam ætas populorum & civitatum,  
 sed equalis illius cælum atq; terras tuentis & regentis Dei. Neq; e-  
 nim esse Mens Divina sine ratione potest, nec ratio divina non hanc  
 vim in rebus pravisq; sancientis habere. *ibid.*



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*son of Things*, is in like manner the *Will of God*. And from hence the Soberest and most Intelligent Persons among the Heathens in all Ages, very rightly and wisely concluded, that the best and certainest part of Natural Religion, which was of the greatest importance, and wherein was the least danger of

† Vis Deos propitiare ?  
Bonus esto : Satis illos coluit, qui imitatus est. Senec. epist. 96.

Καὶ γὰρ δεινὸν ἂν εἴη, εἰ πρὸς τὰ δῶρα καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις ἀποβλέπουσιν ἡμῶν οἱ θεοὶ, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν, εἴ τις ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος ὢν πυγχαίνει. Πονεῖ γὰρ μάλλον οἶμαι, ἢ πρὸς τὰς πολυτελεῖς ταύτας πομπὰς τε καὶ δυνάμεις. Plato in Alcibade 2.

Colitur autem, non taurorum opimis corporibus contrucidatis, nec auro argentoque suspenso, nec in thesauros stipe infusa ; sed pia & recta voluntate. Senec. epist. 116.

their being mistaken ; was † to *imitate* the moral Attributes of God, by a Life of Holiness, Righteousness and Charity : Whereas in the *External* part of their Worship there was nothing but Uncertainty and Doubtfulness : it being absolutely impossible, without exprefs Revelation, to discover what, in that particular, they might be secure would be truly acceptable to God :

This Method of deducing the *Will of God*, from his *Attributes* ; is of all others the best and clearest, the certainest and most universal, that the Light of Nature affords. Yet there are also (as I said) some other collateral considerations, which help to prove and confirm

confirm the same thing ; namely, that all moral Obligations, arising from the Nature and Reason of Things, are likewise the positive Will and Command of God. As

2. This appears in some measure from the consideration of God's *Creation*. For God by *Creating* Things, manifests it to be his Will, that Things *should be what they Are* : And as Providence wonderfully preserves things in their present State ; and all necessary Agents, by constantly and regularly obeying the Laws of their Nature, necessarily employ all their natural Powers in promoting the same end ; so 'tis evident it cannot but \* be the *Will*

of God, that all rational Creatures, whom he has indued with those singular Powers and Faculties, of Understanding, Liberty and Free-Choice, whereby they are exalted in Dignity above the rest of the World ; should likewise imploy those their extraordinary Faculties in preserving the *Order and Harmony* of the Creation, and

\* Mens humana non potest non judicare, esse longe credibilis, quod eadem constantissima voluntas, a qua hominibus datum est esse, pariter mallet ipsos porro esse & valere, hoc est conservari & felicitate frui, quam illo deturbari de statu, in quo ipsos collocavit. — Sic scilicet e voluntate creandi, cognoscitur voluntas conservandi tuendiq; homines. Ex hac autem innotesce obligatio, qua tenemur ad inserviendam eidem voluntati nostræ. Cumberl. de Leg. Nat. pag. 227.

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not in introducing *Disorder and Confusion* therein. The Nature indeed and Relations, the Proportions and Disproportions, the Fittnesses and Unfittnesses of Things, are eternal and in themselves absolutely unalterable ; But this is only upon Supposition that the Things Exist, and that they Exist in such manner as they at present do ; Now that things Exist in such manner as they do, or that they exist at all, depends entirely on the Arbitrary Will and good Pleasure of God : At the same time therefore, and by the same means, that God manifests it to be his Will that things should Exist, and that they should Exist in such manner as they do ; (as by *Creating* them he at first did, and by *Preserving* them he still continually does, declare it to be his Will they should ;) he at the same time manifestly declares, that all such moral Obligations, as are the *result of the necessary proportions and relations of Things*, are likewise *His positive Will and Command* : And consequently, whoever acts contrary to the before-mentioned *Reason and Proportion of Things* ; by *dishonouring God*, by *introducing unjust and unequal Dealings among Equals*, by *destroying*

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stroying his own Being, or by any way corrupting, abusing and misapplying the Faculties wherewith God has indued him ; (as has been above more largely explained :) is unavoidably guilty of Transgressing at the same time the positive Will and Command of God ; which in this manner also, is sufficiently discovered and made known to him.

3. The same thing may likewise further appear from the following Consideration. Whatever tends directly and certainly to promote the Good and Happiness of the Whole, and (as far as is consistent with that chief End) to promote also the Good and Welfare of every particular part of the Creation ;

*And from the Tendency of the practise of Morality to the Good and Happiness of the whole World.*

must needs \* be agreeable to the Will of God ; who being infinitely Self-sufficient to his own Happiness, could have no other Motive to create Things at all, but only that he might communicate to them his Good-

\* Dubitari non potest, quin Deus, qui ita naturalem rerum omnium ordinem constituit, ut talia sint actionum humanarum consequentia erga ipsos auctores ; fecitq; ut ordinaria hæc consequentia ab ipsis præsciri possint, aut summa cum probabilitate expectari ; voluerit hæc ab iis con-

siderari, antequam ad agendum se accingerent ; atq; eos his provisus velut argumentis in Legum sanctione contentis determinari. Cumberland de Leg. Nat. pag. 228.

Rektor. seu Causa prima rationalis, cujus voluntate res ita disponuntur, ut hominibus satis evidenter indicetur, Actus quosdam illorum esse media necessaria ad finem ipsis necessarium ; Vult homines ad hos Actus obligari, vel hos Actus Imperat. Id. pag. 285.

ness and Happiness; and who consequently cannot but expect and require, that all his Creatures should, according to their several Powers and Faculties, endeavour to promote the same End. Now that the exact observance of all those moral Obligations, which have before been proved to arise necessarily from the Nature and Relations of Things; that is, that Living agreeably to the unalterable Rules of Justice, Righteousness, Equity and Truth; is the certainest and directest means to promote the Welfare and Happiness, as well of every Man in particular, both in Body and Mind, as of all Men in general considered with respect to Society; is so very manifest, that even the greatest Enemies of all Religion, who suppose it to be nothing more than a worldly or State-policy, do yet by that very Supposition confess thus much concerning it. And indeed This, it is not possible for any one to deny. For

† *Pari sane ratione (ac in Arithmetice operationibus) Doctrinæ Moralis veritas fundatur in immutabili coherencia inter Felicitatem summam quam Homines vires assequi valent, & Actus Benevolentiae universalis. Id.*  
182. 23.

the practise of *moral Virtue* does † as plainly and undeniably tend to the *natural Good* of the World; as any *Physical Effect* or *Mathematical Truth*, is naturally

rally consequent to the Principles on which it depends, and from which it is regularly derived : And without such Practise in some degree, the World can never be happy in any tolerable measure : As is sufficiently evident from Mr *Hobbs's* own description of the extreme miserable condition that Men would be in, through the Total Defect of the Practise of all *moral Virtue*, if they were to live in that State which He styles (falsely and contrary to all reason, as has been before fully proved,) *the State of Nature* ; but which really is a State of the grossest Abuse and most unnatural Corruption and misapplication of Mens natural Faculties, that can be imagined. For since God has plainly so constituted the nature of Man, that they stand continually in need of each others Help and Assistance, and can never live comfortably without Society and mutual Friendship, and are indued with the faculties of Reason and Speech, and with other natural Powers, evidently fitted to enable them to assist each other in all matters of Life, and mutually to promote universal Love and Happiness ; 'Tis manifestly agreeable to Nature, and to the *Will of God* who gave them these Facul-



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Faculties, that they should employ them wholly to this regular and good End ; And consequently, 'tis on the contrary evident likewise, that all Abuse and Misapplication of these Faculties, to hurt and destroy, to cheat and defraud, to oppress, insult, and domineer over each other ; is directly contrary both to the dictates of Nature, and to the *Will of God* ; who, necessarily doing always what is Best and Fittest and most for the benefit of the whole Creation, 'tis manifest cannot will the corruption and destruction of any of his Creatures ; any otherwise than as his Preserving their natural Faculties, which in themselves are good and excellent, but cannot but be capable of being abused and misapplied, necessarily implies a consequential Permission of such Corruption.

And This now, is the great Aggravation of the Sin and Folly of all Immorality ; that it is an obstinate setting up the *Self-Will* of frail, finite, and fallible Creatures ; as in Opposition to the eternal *Reason* of Things, the unprejudiced *Judgment* of their own Minds, and the general *Good and Wel.*  
fare

fare both of Themselves and their Fellow-creatures ; so also in Opposition to the *Will* of the Supreme *Author and Creatour* of all Things , who gave them their Beings and all the Powers and Faculties they are indued with ; in Opposition to the *Will* of the All-wise *Preserver and Governour* of the Universe, on whose gracious Protection they depend every moment for the preservation and continuance of their Beings ; and in Opposition to the *Will* of their greatest *Benefactor*, to whose Bounty they wholly owe whatever they enjoy at present, or have any ground to hope for hereafter. This is the highest of all Aggravations ; The utmost *Unreasonableness* , joyned with obstinate *Disobedience* and with the greatest *Ingratitude*.

III. *Though the fore-mentioned eternal Moral Obligations, are incumbent indeed on all rational Creatures, antecedent to any respect of particular Reward or Punishment ; yet they must certainly and necessarily be attended with Rewards and Punishments ; Because the same reasons, which prove God himself to be necessarily Just and Good ; and the rules of Justice, Equity*

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*Equity and Goodness, to be his unalterable Will, Law and Command, to all created Beings ; prove also that he cannot but be pleased with and approve such creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those rules, and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto ; and consequently cannot but some way or other, make a suitable Difference in his dealings with them ; and manifest his Supreme Power and Absolute Authority, in finally supporting, maintaining, and vindicating effectually the honour of these his Divine Laws ; as becomes the Just and Righteous Governour and Disposer of all Things.*

This Proposition also is in a manner Self evident.

*That the  
Paradise of  
Virtue or  
Vice must  
be attend-  
ed with  
Rewards  
and Pu-  
nishments,  
proved  
from the  
Attributes  
of God.*

For 1<sup>st</sup>, if God is himself necessarily a Being (as has been before shown) of infinite Goodness, Justice and Holiness: And if the same reasons which prove the Necessity of these Attributes in God himself, prove moreover (as has likewise been shown already,) that the same Moral Obligations must needs be his positive Will, Law and Command, to all rational Creatures : It follows also necessarily, by the very same Argument, that He cannot but be *Pleased*

*with*



with and Approve such Creatures, as imitate and obey him by observing those Rules; and be *Displeased* with such, as act contrary thereto. And if so; then in the Nature of the thing it self it is evident, that having absolute Power and uncontrollable Authority, as being Supreme Governour and Disposer of all Things, He cannot but *Signify*, by some means or other, his Approbation of the One, and his Displeasure against the other. And this, can no way be done to any effectual purpose, but by the Annexing of respective *Rewards and Punishments*. Wherefore if Virtue go finally *unrewarded*, and Wickedness *unpunished*; then God never *Signifies* his Approbation of the one, nor his Displeasure against the other; and if so, then there remains no sufficient proof, that he is really at all *Pleased*, or *Displeased* with either; And the consequence of That, will be, that there is no reason to think the one to be his *Will and Command*, or that the other is *forbidden* by him; Which being once supposed, there will no longer remain any certain evidence of his own *Moral Attributes*. Contrary to what has been already demonstrated.

2. That

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And from  
the Necessi-  
ty there  
is, that  
there  
should be  
some Vin-  
dication of  
the Honour  
of God's  
Laws and  
Govern-  
ment.

2. The Certainty of Rewards and Punishments in general, may also somewhat otherwise be deduced from their being necessary to support the Honour of God and of his Laws and Government; in the following manner. 'Tis manifest we are obliged in the highest Ties of Duty and Gratitude, to pay all possible Honour to God, from whom we received our Being, and all our Powers and Faculties, and whatever else we enjoy: Now 'tis plain likewise, that we have no other way to Honour God, (whose Happiness is capable of no Addition from any thing that any of his Creatures are capable of doing) than by Honouring, that is, by Obeying, his Laws: The Honour therefore that is thus done to his Laws, God is pleased to accept as done immediately to himself: And though we were indeed absolutely obliged in Duty to honour him in this manner, notwithstanding that there had been no Reward to be expected thereupon; yet it is necessary in the government of the World, and well becoming an infinitely wise and good Governour, that those who Honour Him he should Honour, that is, should distinguish them with suitable marks of his Favour. On

1 Sam. 2.  
30.

the

the contrary: Though nothing that weak and finite Creatures are able to do, can in the least diminish from the absolute Glory and Happiness of God; yet, as to Us, the dishonouring, that is, the disobeying his Laws, is a dishonouring of Himself; that is, 'tis, as much as in Us lies, a despising his Supreme Authority, and bringing his Government into Contempt. Now the same reason that there is, why Honour should be *paid* to the Laws of God at all; the same reason there is, that That Honour should be *vindicated*, after it has been diminished and infringed by Sin; For no Law-giver who has Authority to require Obedience to his Laws, can or ought to see his Laws despised and dishonoured, without taking some measures to vindicate the Honour of them, for the support and dignity of his own Authority, and Government: And the only way, by which the Honour of a Law, or of its Author, can be vindicated, after it has been infringed by wilful Sin; is either by the *Repentance and Reformation* of the Transgressor, or by his *Punishment and Destruction*: So that God is necessarily obliged, in vindication of the Honour of his  
Laws



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Laws and Government, to punish those who presumptuously and impenitently disobey his Commandments. Wherefore if there be no distinction made by suitable *Rewards and Punishments*, between those who obey the Laws of God, and those who obey them not; then God suffers the Authority of his Laws to be finally trampled upon and despised without ever making any Vindication of it: Which being impossible, it will follow that these things are not really the Laws of God, and that he has no such regard to them as we imagine: And the consequence of this, must needs be the denial of his *Moral Attributes*; Contrary, as before, to what has been already proved. And consequently the Certainty of *Rewards and Punishments in general*, is necessarily established,

IV. *Though in order to establish this suitable Difference between the Fruits or Effects of Virtue and Vice, so reasonable in it self, and so absolutely necessary for the Vindication of the Honour of God; The Nature of Things, and the Constitution and Order of God's Creation, was originally such, that the observance of the eternal rules of Justice, Equity and Goodness;*

ness, does indeed of it self tend by direct and natural consequence to make all Creatures happy ; and the contrary practise, to make them miserable ; Yet since through some great and general Corruption and depravation (whencesoever That may have arisen,) the condition of Men in this present State is such, that the natural order of things in this World is in event manifestly perverted, and Virtue and Goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due Effects in establishing Mens Happiness proportionable to their behaviour and practise ; Therefore it is absolutely impossible, that the whole View and Intention, the original and the final Design, of God's creating such rational Beings as Men are, and placing them on this Globe of Earth, as the chief and principal or indeed (to speak more properly) the only Inhabitants, for whose sake alone This part at least of the Creation is manifestly fitted up and accommodated ; It is absolutely impossible, I say, that the whole of God's Design in all this, should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a Succession of such short-lived Generations of Men, as we at present are ; and those in such a corrupt, confused and disorderly State of Things, as we see the

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*World is now in ; without any due Observation of the eternal Rules of Good and Evil, without any clear and remarkable Effect of the great and most necessary Differences of Things, and without any final Vindication of the Honour and Laws of God in the proportionable Reward of the best, or Punishment of the worst of Men : And consequently it is certain and necessary, (even as certain as the moral Attributes of God before demonstrated,) that instead of continuing an eternal Succession of new Generations in the present Form and State of Things, there must at some time or other be such a Revolution and Renovation of Things, or such a Future State of existence of the same Persons, as that by an exact distribution of Rewards and Punishments therein, all the present disorders and inequalities may be set right ; and the whole Scheme of Providence, which to Us who judge of it by only one small portion of it, seems now so inexplicable and confused ; shall appear at its consummation, to be a design worthy of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness.*

*That according to the original Constitution of things, Virtue and Vice are attended with Natural Rewards and Punishments.*

1. In order to establish a just and suitable Difference between the respective Fruits or Effects of Virtue and Vice ; the Nature of Things, and the Con-



Constitution and Order of God's Creation, was originally such, that the Observance of the eternal Rules of Piety, Justice, Equity, Goodness and Temperance, does of it self plainly *Tend by direct and natural consequence*, to make all Creatures happy ; and the contrary Practise, to make them miserable. This is evident in general ; because the practise of universal Virtue, is (in imitation of the Divine Goodness) the practise of that which is *Best* in the whole ; and that which tends to the benefit of the Whole, must of necessary consequence, *originally and in its own nature*, tend also to the benefit of every individual Part of the Creation. More particular : A *constant Contemplating* the infinitely excellent *Perfections* of the All-mighty Creator, and All-wise Governour of the World, and our most bountiful Benefactor ; so as to excite in our Minds a suitable Adoration, Love, and Imitation of those Perfections : A *regular imploying* all our *Powers and Faculties*, in such designs and to such purposes only, as they were originally fitted and intended for by Nature : And a *due subjecting* all our *Appetites and Passions*, to the government

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of

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of sober and modest Reason : are evidently the directest means to obtain such *settled Peace and solid Satisfaction of Mind*, as is the first foundation, and the principal and most necessary ingredient of all true Happiness. The *temperate and moderate injoyment* of all the good things of this present World, and of the pleasures of Life, according to the measures of right Reason and simple Nature ; is plainly and confessedly the certainest and most direct Method, to preserve the *Health and Strength of the Body*. And the practise of universal *Justice, Equity and Benevolence* ; is manifestly (as has been before observed) as direct and adæquate a means to promote the *general welfare and happiness of Men in Society*, as any Physical Motion, or Geometrical Operation, is to produce its natural Effect. So that if all Men were truly Virtuous, and practised these Rules in such manner, that the Miseries and Calamities arising usually from the numberless Follies and Vices of Men, were prevented ; undoubtedly this great Truth would evidence it self visibly in fact, and appear experimentally in the happy State and condition of the World.

On

On the contrary : Neglect of God, and Insensibleness of our relation and duty towards him ; Abuse and unnatural misapplication of the Powers and Faculties of our Minds ; Inordinate Appetites, and unbridled and furious Passions ; necessarily fill the Mind with Confusion, Trouble, and Vexation : And Intemperance, naturally brings Weakness, Pains, and Sickneses into the Body : And mutual Injustice and Iniquity ; Fraud, Violence and Oppression ; Wars, and Desolations ; Murders, Rapine, and all kinds of Cruelty ; are sufficiently plain causes of the Miseries and Calamities of Men in Society. So that the original Constitution, Order and Tendency of Things, is evidently enough fitted and designed, to establish naturally a just and suitable Difference in general between Virtue and Vice, by their respective Fruits or Effects.

2. But tho' originally the Constitution and Order of Gods Creation was indeed such, that Virtue and Vice are by the regular Tendency of Things, followed with natural Rewards and Punishments : Yet in Event, through some great and general corruption and depravation, (whence-soever That may have arisen, of which more hereafter,) the condition of Men in

But that now in this present World, the natural Order of things is so perverted, that Vice often flourishes in great prosperity, and Virtue falls under the greatest calamities of Life.



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the present State is plainly such, that this natural Order of things in the World is manifestly perverted ; Virtue and Goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due effect, in establishing Mens happiness proportionable to their behaviour and practise ; and Wickedness and Vice very frequently escape the Punishment, which the general nature and disposition of Things *Tends* to annex unto it. Wicked Men, by Stupidity, Inconsiderateness, and Sensual Pleasure, often make shift to silence the reproaches of Conscience ; and feel very little of that confusion and remorse of Mind, which ought naturally to be consequent upon their vitious Practises : By accidental Strength and Robustness of Constitution, they frequently escape the natural evil consequences of Intemperance and Debauchery ; and enjoy the same proportion of health and vigour, as those who live up to the rules of strict and unblameable Sobriety : And Injustice and Iniquity, Fraud, Violence and Cruelty, though they are always attended indeed with sufficiently calamitous consequences *in the general* ; yet the most of those evil consequences fall  
not

not always upon such persons *in particular*, as have the greatest share in the guilt of the Crimes, but very commonly on those that have the least. On the contrary ; Virtue and Piety, Temperance and Sobriety, Faithfulness, Honesty and Charity ; though they have indeed both in themselves the true Springs of Happiness, and also the greatest probabilities of outward causes to concur in promoting their temporal Prosperity ; though they cannot indeed be prevented from affording a Man the highest Peace and Satisfaction of Spirit, and many other advantages both of Body and Mind in respect of his own particular Person ; yet in respect of those Advantages which the mutual Practise of social Virtues ought to produce in common, it is in experience found true, that the Vices of a great part of Mankind do so far prevail against nature and reason, as frequently to oppress the Virtue of the Best ; and not only hinder them from injoying those publick Benefits, which would naturally and regularly be the consequences of their Virtue ; but oft-times bring upon them the greatest temporal Calamities, even for the sake of that

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very Virtue. For it is but too well known, that Good Men are very often afflicted and impoverished, and made a prey to the Covetousness and Ambition of the Wicked; and sometimes most cruelly and maliciously persecuted, even upon the account of their Goodness it self. In all which affairs, the Providence of God seems not very evidently to interpose for the Protection of the Righteous: And not only so; but even in Judgments also, which seem more immediately to be inflicted by the Hand of Heaven, it frequently suffers the Righteous to be involved in the same Calamities with the Wicked, as they are mixed together in Business and the Affairs of the World.

*That therefore there must needs be a Future State of Rewards and Punishments.*

3. Which things being so; that there is plainly in Event no sufficient distinction made between Virtue and Vice; no proportionable and certain Reward annexed to the one, nor Punishment to the other, in this present World; And yet it being undeniably certain in the general, (as has been before shown,) that if there be a God, and That God be himself a Being of infinite Justice and Goodness, and it be his Will that all rational Creatures should imitate his moral Perfections, and he

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\* cannot but see and take notice how every Creature behaves it self, and be *accordingly* pleased with such as Obey his Will and imitate his Nature, and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto; It being certain, I say, that if these things be so, he must needs, in vindication of the Honour of his Laws and Government, signifie at some time or other this his Approbation or Displeasure, by making finally a suitable Difference between those who Obey him, and those who obey him not; It follows unavoidably, either that all these Notions which we frame concerning God, are false; and that there is no Providence, and God sees not, or at least has no regard to what is done by his Creatures, and consequently the ground of all his own moral Attributes is taken away, and even his Being it self; Or else that there must necessarily be a *Future State of Rewards and Punishments after this Life*, wherein all the present Difficulties of Providence shall be cleared up, by an exact and impartial administration of Justice,

\* Εἰ γὰρ μὴ λανθάνετον  
τὰς θεάς, ὁ μὲν δικαίῳ θεο-  
φιλήσιν ἀνείη, ὁ δὲ ἀδίκῳ θεο-  
μισῆς—— Τῷ γὰρ θεοφιλεῖ,  
ὅσοι γε ἕπον θεῶν γίγνεται,  
πάντα γίγνεται ὡς οἶν' ἡ ἀ-  
εῖσα—— Οὕτως ἀρετῶν ἀποληπ-  
τόν περὶ τῶν δικαίων ἀνδρῶν,  
εἰάν τ' ἐν πείρᾳ γίγνηται, εἰάν-  
τ' ἐν νόσοις, ἢ τινὶ ἄλλῳ τῶν  
δεκέντων χαλῶν· ὡς τὲ τῶν  
πάντων εἰς ἀγαθόν τι τελευτή-  
σας ζῶντι ἢ καὶ ἀποθανόντι. ἔ-  
στι δὲ ὑπὸ γε θεῶν ποτὲ ἀμε-  
λείῃ ὅς ἂν περὶ συμπεῖσαι ἐδέ-  
λη δικαίῳ γίγνεται, καὶ ὁπ-  
πότε δὲ ἀρετῶν εἰς ὅσον  
δυνατὸν ἀνδρώπων ὁμοῖσθαι  
θεῶν. Plato de Republ. lib.  
10.

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Justice. But now, that there is a God, and a Providence, and that God is himself a Being endued with all moral Perfections, and expects and commands that all his rational Creatures should govern all their Actions by the same Rules; has been particularly and distinctly proved already: It is therefore directly Demonstrated, that there must be a *Future State* of Rewards and Punishments. *Let not thine heart envy Sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; For surely there is a Reward, and thine Expectation shall not be cut off.* Prov. 23.

17 & 18.

*Of the Stoical Opinion concerning the Self-sufficiency of Virtue to its own Happiness.*

4. This Argument is indeed a common one; but it is nevertheless strongly conclusive and unanswerable: And hereby, whoever denies a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, must of necessity by a chain of unavoidable Consequences be forced to recur to downright Atheism. The only middle Opinion that can be invented, is that Assertion of the *Stoicks*, that Virtue is *Self-sufficient* to its own Happiness, and a full Reward to it self in all cases, even under the greatest Sufferings that can befall a Man for its sake. Men who were not *Certain* of a Future State, (tho most of them did indeed believe it high-

ly

ly probable;) and yet would not give up the Cause of Virtue; had no other way left to defend it, than by asserting that it was in all Cases and under all Circumstances, absolutely *Self-sufficient* to its own Happiness. Whereas on the contrary, because it is manifestly *not Self-sufficient*, and yet undoubtedly the Cause of Virtue is not to be given up; therefore they ought from thence to have concluded the *Certainty* of a Future State. That Virtue is truly *worthy* to be chosen, even merely for its own sake, without any respect to any recompense or reward; must indeed necessarily be acknowledged. But it does not from hence follow, that He who *Dies* for the sake of Virtue, is really any more *Happy*, than he that dies for any fond Opinion or any unreasonable Humour or Obstinacy whatsoever; if he has no other Happiness than the bare Satisfaction arising from the Imagination of his resoluteness in persisting to preserve his Virtue, and in adhering immoveably to what he judges to be right; and there be no Future State wherein he may reap any Benefit of that his resolute perseverance: On the contrary, it will only follow, that God has made  
Virtue



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Virtue necessarily amiable, and such as Mens Judgment and Conscience can never but choose; and yet that he has not annexed to it any sufficient encouragement, to support Men effectually in that Choice. Brave indeed and admirable were the Things which some of the Philosophers have said upon this Subject; and which some very few extraordinary Men (of which *Regulus* is a remarkable instance) seem to have made good in their Practice, even beyond the common Abilities of humane Nature: But 'tis very plain (as I † before hinted) that the general Practice of Virtue in the World, can never be supported upon this Foot; It being indeed neither possible nor truly reasonable, that Men by adhering to Virtue should part with their Lives, if

\* thereby they eternally deprived themselves of all possibility of receiving any Advantage from that adherence. Virtue, 'tis true, in its proper Seat, and with all its full Effects and Consequences unhindered; must be confessed to be the *Chief Good*; as being truly the Enjoyment, as well as the Imitation of God: But, as the

† Practice

\* Οὐκ ὅτι οὕτως μακα-  
ρίους ὑπελάβω τὸς μηδὲν  
ἀπολαύσαντας τὴν ἀρετῆς ἀγα-  
θόν, δι' αὐτὴν δὲ πάντων ἀπο-  
λουμένους. *Dionys. Halicarn.*

† Practise of it is circumstantiated in this present World, and in the present State of Things; 'tis plain it is not it self the Chief Good, but only the means to it; as Running in a Race, is not it self the Prize, but the way to obtain it.

† Porro, ipsa Virtus, cum sibi bonorum culmen vendiceret humanorum, quid hic agit nisi perpetua bella cum vitiis; nec exterioribus, sed interioribus; nec alienis, sed plane nostris & propriis? — Absit ergo, ut quamdiu in hoc bello intestino sumus, jam nos beatitudinem, ad quam vincendo volumus pervenire, adeptos esse credamus. *Augustin. de Civitate Dei, lib. 19. c. 4.*

Non enim virtus ipsa est *Summum Bonum*, sed effectrix & mater est summi boni; quoniam perveniri ad illud sine virtute non potest. *Lactant. lib. 3.*

5. 'Tis therefore absolutely impossible, *From whence the Certainty of a Future State is again concluded.* that the whole View and Intention, the original and the final design of Gods creating such Rational Beings as Men are; endued with such noble Faculties, and so necessarily conscious of the eternal and unchangeable Differences of Good and Evil: 'Tis absolutely impossible, I say, that the whole Design of an infinitely Wise and Just and Good God, in all This, should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a Succession of new Generations of Men; and those in such a corrupt, confused, and disorderly state of Things, as we see the present World is in; without any due and regular

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regular Observation of the eternal Rules of Good and Evil, without any clear and remarkable Effect of the great and most necessary Differences of Things, without any sufficient Discrimination of Virtue and Vice by their proper and respective Fruits, and without any final Vindication of the Honour and Laws of God in the proportionable Reward of the Best, or Punishment of the Worst of Men. And consequently it is certain and necessary, (even as certain as the moral Attributes of God before demonstrated,) that instead of continuing an eternal Succession of new Generations in the present Form and State of Things, there must at some time or other be such a Revolution and Renovation of Things, or such a *Future State* of existence of the same Persons, as that by an exact distribution of Rewards and Punishments therein, all the present Disorders and Inequalities may be set right ; and the whole Scheme of Providence, which to Us who judge of it by only one small portion of it, seems now so inexplicable and much confused ; shall appear at its Consummation, to be a design worthy of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness. Without  
This,



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This, All \* comes to Nothing : If this Scheme be once broken ; there is no Justice, no Goodness, no Order, no Reason, nor any thing upon which any Argument in moral matters can be founded, left in the World. Nay, even though we should set aside all consideration of the *Moral* Attributes of God, and consider only his *Natural* Perfections, his infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, as Framer and Builder of the World ; it would even in That view only, appear infinitely improbable, that God should have created such Beings as Men are, and indued them with such excellent Faculties, and placed them on this Globe of Earth, as the only Inhabitants for whose sake This part at least of the Creation is manifestly fitted up and accommodated ; and all this without any further design, than † only for the maintaining of a perpetual Succession of such short-lived Generations of Mortals, as we at present are ; to live in the utmost confusion and disorder for a very few Years,

\* Ita fit, ut si ab illa rerum Summa, quam superius comprehendimus, aberraveris ; omnis ratio intereat, & ad nihilum omnia revertantur. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

† Non enim temere, nec fortuito sati & creati sumus ; sed profecto fuit quædam vis, quæ generi consuleret humano, nec id gigneret aut aleret, quod cum exantlavisset omnes labores, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum. *Cic. Tuscul. Quest. lib. 1.*

and

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and then Perish eternally into Nothing.

\* Si sine causa gignimur, si in hominibus procreandis providentia nulla versatur; si casu nobismetipsis, ac voluptatis nostræ gratia nascimur; si nihil post mortem sumus; quid potest esse tam *supervacuum*, tam *inane* tam *vanum*, quam humana res est, quam mundus ipse? *Laſtant. lib. 7.*

What \* can be imagined more vain and empty? what more absurd? what more void of all Marks of Wisdom, than the Fabrick of the World, and the Creation of Mankind, upon this Supposition? But then, take in also the Con-

sideration of the *Moral* Attributes of God; and it amounts (as I have said) to a complete Demonstration, that there must be a *Future State*.

*Why the Wisdom of God is not so clearly and plainly seen in his government of the Moral, as in the fabrick of the Natural World.*

6. It may here at first sight seem to be a very strange thing, that through the whole System of Nature, in the *material*, in the *inanimate*, in the *irrational* part of the Creation, every *single* thing should have in it self so many and so obvious, so evident and undeniable marks, of the infinitely accurate Skill and Wisdom of their Almighty Creator; that from the brightest Star in the Firmament of Heaven, to the meanest Pebble upon the face of the Earth, there is no one piece of Matter which does not afford such instances of admirable Artifice and exact Proportion and Contrivance, as exceeds all the Wit of Man.

(I do not say to imitate, but even) ever to be able fully to search out and comprehend ; And yet, that in the management of the *rational and moral World*, for the sake of which all the rest was created, and is preserved only to be subservient to it ; there should not in *many Ages* be plain Evidences enough, either of the Wisdom, or of the Justice and Goodness of God, or of so much as the interposition of his divine Providence at all ; to convince Mankind clearly and generally of the World's being under his immediate Care, Inspection and Government. This, I say, may indeed at first sight seem very wonderful. But if we consider the matter more closely and attentively ; it will appear not to be so strange and astonishing, as we are apt to imagine. For, as in a great *Machine*, contrived by the skill of a consummate Artificer, fitted up and adjusted with all conceivable Accuracy for some very difficult and deep-projected Design, and polished and fine-wrought in every part of it with admirable niceness and dexterity ; any Man who saw and examined one or two Wheels of it, could not fail to observe in those single parts of it the

N

admir-



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admirable Art and exact skill of the Work-man ; and yet the excellency of the End or Use for which the whole was contrived, he would not at all be able, even though he was himself also a skilful Artificer, to discover and comprehend, without seeing the Whole fitted up and put together : So though in every part of the *natural* World, considered even single and unconnected, the Wisdom of the great Creator sufficiently appears ; yet his Wisdom and Justice and Goodness in the Disposition and Government of the *moral* World, which necessarily depends on the Connexion and Issue of the whole Scheme, cannot perhaps be distinctly and fully comprehended by any Finite and Created Beings, much less by frail and weak and short-lived Mortals, before the Period and Accomplishment of certain great Revolutions.

This is the chief and greatest Argument, on which the *natural* Proof of a *Future state of Rewards and Punishments*, must principally be founded. Yet there are also several other collateral Evidences, which joyntly conspire to render the same Thing exceedingly credible to mere natural Reason. As

1st. There is very great Reason, of the Im-  
 even from the bare *Nature* of the Thing mortality  
 it self, to believe the *Soul to be Immor-* of the Soul;  
*tal*; Separate from all Moral Argu- and the  
 ments, drawn from the Attributes of natural  
 God; and without any consideration Proofs we  
 of the general System of the World, or have of it.  
 of the universal Order and Constitution,  
 connexion and dependencies of Things.  
 The Immortality of the Soul has been  
 commonly believed in \*

all Ages and in all Places, \* Et primum quidem  
 omni Antiquitate, &c. Cic.  
 Tusc. Quest. lib. I.  
 by the *unlearned* part of  
 all civilized People, and

by the almost general consent of all  
 the most *barbarous* Nations under Hea-  
 ven; from a *Tradition* so ancient and  
 so universal, as cannot be conceived  
 to owe its original either to Chance  
 or to vain Imagination, or to any  
 other Cause than to the Author of  
 Nature Himself: And the most *learn-*  
*ed and thinking* part of Mankind, at all  
 times and in all Countries, where the  
 study of Philosophy has been in any  
 measure cultivated, have pretty gene-  
 rally agreed, that it is capable of a just  
 Proof from the abstract consideration  
 of the *Nature and Operations* of the Soul  
 it self. That none of the known Qualities  
 of *Matter*, can in any possible Variation,

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† Demon-  
stration of  
the Being  
and Attri-  
butes of  
God. pag.  
113.

Division, or Composition, produce *Sense* and *Thought* and *Reason*; is abundantly evident, as has been demonstrated in the former † Discourse: That *Matter* consists of innumerable divisible, separable, and for the most part actually disjoyned Parts; is acknowledged by all Philosophers: That the *Powers and Faculties of the Soul*, being the most remote and distant from all the known Properties of *Matter*, that can be imagined; it is at least a putting great violence upon our Reason, to imagine them superadded by Omnipotence to one and the same Substance; cannot easily be denied: That it is highly unreasonable and absurd, to suppose the Soul made up of innumerable Consciousnesses, as *Matter* is necessarily made up of innumerable Parts; and on the contrary, that 'tis highly reasonable to believe the *seat of Thought* to be a simple Substance, such as cannot naturally be divided and crumbled into Pieces, as all *Matter* is manifestly subject to be; must of necessity be confessed: Consequently the *Soul* will not be liable to be dissolved at the dissolution of the *Body*; And therefore it will naturally be *Immortal*. All this seems to follow, at least with the highest degree of probability, from the single

con-



consideration of the Souls being endued with Sense, Thought or Consciousness.

I cannot imagine, saith \* Cyrus, in that Speech which Xenophon relates he made to his Children a little before his Death, that the Soul, while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and that when it is separated from it, then it should die: I cannot persuade my self, that the

\* Οὗτοι ἔγωγε, ὦ παῖδες, εἴθε τὸ το πῶποτε ἐπειδὴ, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ, ἕως ἂν ἐν θνητῷ σώματι ᾖ, ζῇ· ὅταν δὲ τέτε ἀπαλλαγῇ, τεθνήσκεν. -- Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πῶς ἀφ' ὧν ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἀφ' ὧν σῶμα ἔσται διχα γένηται, εἴθε τὸ το πέπισμαι. Ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀχράϊστα καὶ καθαροὺς ὁ νῦν ἐκκριθῇ, τότε καὶ φρονιμώτατον εἶδος αὐτὸν εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

Soul, by being separated from this Body which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become it self likewise devoid of Sense: On the contrary, it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the Mind is separated from the Body, Then it should become most of all sensible and intelligent: Thus He. But then further, if we take also into the Consideration all the higher and nobler Faculties, Capacities and Improvements of the Soul; the Argument will still become much stronger. I am persuaded, saith † Cicero, when I consider with what Swiftneſs of Thought the Soul is indued, with what

† Quid multa?  
Sic mihi persuasi,  
sic sentio;

quum tanta celeritas animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ scientiæ, tot inventa; non posse eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, esse mortalem. Cic. de senectute.

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*a wonderful Memory of Things past, and fore-cast of Things to come; how many Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful Inventions it has found out; that That Nature, which is Possessur of such Faculties, cannot be Mortal. Again;*

\* Qued & præterita re-  
near, & futura provideat,  
& comp'ecti possit præsen-  
tia; hæc divina sunt; nec  
invenietur unquam, unde  
ad hominem venire possint,  
nisi a Deo. Idem Tusc.  
Quæst. lib. 1.

*The Memory, saith \* he, that the Soul has of Things that have been, and its fore-sight of Things that will be, and its large Comprehension of things that at present are, are plainly divine Powers:*

*Nor can the Wit of Man ever invent any way, by which these Faculties could possibly come to be in Men, but by immediate Communication from God. Again; Tho*

‡ Mentem hominis, quam-  
vis eam non videas, ut De-  
um non vides; tamen, ut  
Deum agnoscis ex ope-  
ribus ejus, sic ex memoria  
rerum & inventione & ce-  
leritate Motus, omniq; pul-  
chritudine virtutis, vim di-  
vinam Mentis agnoscito. Id.  
ibid.

*we see not, saith || he, the Soul of Man, as indeed neither are we able to see God; Yet, as from the Works of God we are certain of his Being; so from the Faculties of the Soul, its Memory, its In-*

*vention, its Swiftneſs of Thought, its noble Exercise of all Virtues, we cannot but be convinc'd of its divine original and nature. And, speaking of the Strength and Beauty of that Argument, which from*

*the*

the wonderful Faculties and Capacities of the Soul, concludes it to be of an Immaterial and Immortal Nature ; *Tho' all the vulgar and little Philosophers in the World*, saith † he, (for so I cannot but call all such, as dissent from Plato and Socrates and those superiour Geniuses,) should put their Heads together ; they will not only never, while they live, be able to explain any thing so neatly and elegantly ; but even this Argument it self, they will never have Understanding enough fully to perceive and comprehend, how neat and beautiful and strong it is. The chief Prejudice against the belief of the Souls existing thus and Living, after the Death of the Body ; and the Summ of all the Objections brought against this Doctrine by the *Epicurean* Philosophers of old, who denied the Immortality of the Soul ; and by certain Atheistical Persons of late, who differ very little from them in their manner of reasoning ; is This : That they \* cannot ap-

† Licet concurrant plebei omnes philosophi, (sic enim ii qui a Platone & Socrate & ab illa familia dissent, appellandi videntur,) non modo nihil unquam tam eleganter explicabunt, sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum sit intelligent. Id. ibid.

\* ——— Si immortalis natura animæ est,  
Et sentire potest secreta a corpore nostro ;  
Quinq; (ut opinor) eam faciundum est sensibus ausam ;  
— At neq; seorsum oculi, &c.

Lucret. lib. 3.



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Quod autem corpus animæ per se? quæ materia? ubi cogitatio illi? quomodo visus? auditus? aut qui tangit? qui usus ejus? aut quod sine his bonum? *Plin. lib. 7.*

Neq; aliud est quidquam cur incredibilis his animorum videatur æternitas, nisi quod nequeunt *qualis* sit *animus vacans corpore* intelligere & cogitatione comprehendere. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1.*

|| Quasi vero intelligent *qualis* sit *in ipso corpore*. — Mihi quidem naturam animi intuenti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio; multoq; obscurior, *qualis animus in corpore sit*, quam *qualis cum exierit*. *Id. ibid.*

prehend how the Soul can have any *Sense*, or *Perception*, *without* the Body wherein evidently are all the *Organs of Sense*. But neither || can they any better apprehend or explain how the Soul in the Body, (that is, the Body it self, according to their Opinion,) is capable of *Sense or Perception*, by means of the *Organs of Sense*. And besides: This Argument, that the Soul can have no Perception when all the ways of Per-

ception, that we have at present Ideas of, are removed; is exactly the very same Argument, and no other, than what a Man born blind might make use of with the very same force, to prove that none of Us can possibly have in our present Bodies any *Perception* of Light or Colours; as I have explained more particularly in the † former Discourse.

† Demon-  
strat. of  
Being and  
Attrib. of  
God. pag. 167, 169.

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This consideration, of the Souls appearing in all Reason to be *naturally immortal*, afforded great Pleasure and Satisfaction to the wisest and soberest Men in the Heathen World; was a great Support under Calamities and Sufferings, especially under such as Men brought upon themselves by being Virtuous; filled them with great hopes and comfortable expectations of what was to come hereafter; and was a mighty encouragement to the practise of all moral Virtue, and particularly to take pains in subduing the Body and keeping it in subjection to the Reason of the Mind. *First*, It afforded great Pleasure and Satisfaction, to the wisest and soberest Men in the Heathen World, from the bare Contemplation of the Thing it self. *No body*, saith

*\* Cicero, shall ever drive Me from the Hope of Immortality: And, † If this my Opinion concerning the Immortality of the Soul, should at last prove an Errour; yet it is a very delightful Errour; And I will never suffer my self to be undeceived in so pleasing an Opinion, as long as I live. Secondly,*

*\* Sed Me nemo de immortalitate depellet. Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. 1.*

*† Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Idem de senectute.*

It

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It was a great Support to them under Calamities and Sufferings, especially under such as Men brought upon themselves by being Virtuous: *These and*

|| His & talibus adductus Socrates, nec patronum quæsit ad iudicium capiris, nec iudicibus supplex fuit; & suprema vitæ die de hoc ipso multa differuit; & paucis ante diebus, cum facile posset educi e custodia, noluit. — Ita enim censebat, itaq; differuit, duas esse vias, duplicesq; cursus animorum, e corpore excedentium, &c. *Id. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1.*

*thelike Contemplations, saith || Cicero, had such an Effect upon Socrates, that when he was tried for his life, he neither desired any Advocate to plead his Cause, nor made any supplication to his Judges for Mercy; and on the very last day of his Life, made many excellent Discourses upon this Subject; and a few days before, when*

*he had an opportunity offered him to have escaped out of Prison, he would not lay hold of it; For thus he believed, and thus he taught; that when the Souls of Men depart out of their Bodies, they go two different ways; the Virtuous to a place of Happiness, the Wicked and the Sensual to Misery. Thirdly, It filled them with great Hopes, and comfortable Expectations of what was to come hereafter.*

\* O præclarum diem, quum in illud animorum concilium catumq; proficiscar, & quum ex hac turba & colluvione discedam! *Idem de Senect.*

*O happy Day, saith \* the good old Man in Cicero, when I shall go to that blessed Assembly of Spirits, and depart*



depart out of this wicked and miserably confused World ! Lastly, It was a mighty encouragement to the practise of all moral Virtue, and particularly to take pains in subduing the Body and keeping it in subjection to the Reason of the Mind : We ought to

spare no Pains, saith † Plato, to obtain the Habit of Virtue and Wisdom in this Life ; For the Prize is

noble, and the Hope is very great. Again ; having reckoned up the temporal Advantages of Virtue in the present World, he adds ; || But

we have not yet mentioned the greatest and chiefest rewards, which are proposed to Virtue ; For what can be truly great, in so small a proportion of Time ? The whole Age of the longest

Liver in this our present World, being inconsiderable and nothing in comparison of Eternity. And again ; These things

saith \* he, are nothing, either in Number or Greatness, in comparison with those Rewards of Virtue, and Punishments of Vice, which attend

† Χρη πάντα ποιῆν. ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν ταῖς βίῃ μετασχεῖν· χαλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀθάνατον, καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη.  
Plato in Phadone.

|| Καὶ μὴ τὰ γε μέγιστα ὀφείματα ἀρετῆς καὶ προκείμενα ἀθάνατον διελκυσάμενα. --- Τί δ' ἂν ἐν γε ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ μέγα γένοιτο ; πᾶς γὰρ ἕως γὰρ ὁ ἐν παιδὶ μέγας πρεσβύτερος χρόνος πᾶν ἴσα ὀλίγον περὶ τίς ἂν εἴη.  
Plato de Republ. lib. 10.

\* Ταῦτα πόνημα ἔστιν ὅτι πλήθος ἐστὶ μέγιστον πρὸς οὐκ εἶναι ἀτελεστάτων ἐκείνων περιουσία. Idem ibid.

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*Men after Death.* And, to mention no

†Οἱ μὲν ἄρα νίκης ἐνεκα  
πύλης καὶ δόμων καὶ τοῦ τοῦ-  
των, ἐπόλυσαν ἀπέχεσθαι.  
---Οἱ δὲ ἡμέτεροι παῖδες ἀ-  
δυσκότησει καρτερεῖν, πολὺ  
καλλίον ἐνεκα νίκης; Pla-  
to de Legib. lib. 8.

more places; *They, saith*  
† *he, who in the Games*  
*hope to obtain a Victory in*  
*such poor Matters, as Wra-  
stling, Running, and the like;*  
*think not much to prepare*

*themselves for the contest by great Tempe-  
rance and Abstinence: And shall our Scho-  
lars in the Study of Virtue, not have cou-  
rage and resolution enough, to perse-  
vere with Patience, for a far nobler*  
*Prize?* Words very like those of St  
Paul, 1 Cor. 9. 24. *Know ye not, that*  
*they which run in a Race, run all; And*  
*every Man that striveth for the Mastery,*  
*is temperate in all things? Now they do*  
*it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an*  
*incorruptible.*

*The Ar-  
gument for  
a Future  
State,  
drawn  
from Mens  
natural de-  
sire of Im-  
mortality.*

2. Another Argument which may be  
used in proof of a *Future State*, so far  
as to amount to a very great probabili-  
ty; is that *necessary Desire of Immortali-  
ty*, which seems to be naturally im-  
planted in all Men, with an unavoid-  
able *Concern* for what is to come hereaf-  
ter. If there be no Existence after this  
Life; it will seem that the irrational  
Creatures, who always enjoy the *present*  
*Good* without any Care or Solicitude for  
what

what may happen *afterwards*, are better provided for by Nature than Men, whose Reason and Foresight, and all other those very Faculties, by which they are made more excellent than Beasts, serve them, upon this Supposition, scarcely for any other purpose, than to render them *uneasie* and *uncertain* and *fearful* and *solicitous* about things which are not. And it is not at all probable, that God should have given Men *Appetites*, which were *never to be satisfied*; *Desires*, which had *no Objects* to answer them; and unavoidable *Apprehensions*, of what was *never really to come to pass*.

3. Another Argument, which may <sup>Another, drawn from Mens</sup> be brought to prove a *Future State*, is <sup>Conscience</sup> that *Conscience* which all Men have of <sup>or Judgment of</sup> their own Actions, or that inward *Judgment* which they necessarily pass upon <sup>their own</sup> them in their own Minds; whereby <sup>Actions.</sup> they that *have not any Law, are a Law* <sup>Rom. 2. 14</sup> *unto themselves, their Conscience bearing* <sup>and 15.</sup> *Witness, and their Thoughts accusing or else excusing one another.* There is no Man, who at any time does good and brave and generous things, but the reason of his own Mind applauds him for so doing; and no Man at any time does things base and vile, dishonourable



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rable and wicked, but at the same time he condemns himself in what he does. The one is necessarily accompanied with good Hope, and Expectation of Reward : The other with continual torment and Fear of Punishment. And hence, as before, it is not probable, that God should have so framed and constituted the Mind of Man, as necessarily to pass upon it self a *Judgment* which shall *never be verified*, and stand perpetually and unavoidably convicted by a *Sentence* which shall *never be confirmed*.

*Another,  
drawn  
from Mans  
being by  
nature an  
accountable  
Creature.*

4. Lastly, Another Argument which may be drawn from right Reason in proof of a *Future State*, is this ; that Man is plainly in his Nature an *Accountable Creature*, and capable of being *Judged*. Those Creatures indeed, whose Actions are all determined by something without themselves, or by what we call mere instinct ; as they are not capable of having a Rule given them, so 'tis evident that neither can they be accountable for their Actions : But Man, who has intirely within himself a free principle or power of determining his own Actions upon moral Motives, and has a Rule given him to Act by, which

is

is Right Reason ; can be, nay cannot but be, accountable for all his Actions, how far they have been agreeable or disagreeable to that Rule. Every Man, because of the natural Liberty of his Will, *can* and *ought* to govern all his Actions by some certain Rule, and give a Reason for every thing he does. Every moral Action he performs, being Free and without any compulsion or natural necessity, proceeds either from some *Good Motive* or some *Evil* one ; is either *conformable to right Reason*, or *contrary* to it ; is worthy either of *Praise* or *Dispraise*, and capable either of *Aggravation* or *Excuse*. Consequently it is highly reasonable to be supposed, that since there is a Superiour Being, from whom we received all our Faculties and Powers ; and in the *right Use* or in the *Abuse* of those Faculties, in the governing them by the rule of right Reason or in the neglecting that Rule, consists all the moral Difference of our Actions ; there will at some time or other be an *Examination* or *Inquiry* made into the grounds and motives and circumstances of our several Actions, how agreeable or disagreeable they have been to the Rule that was given

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us ; and a suitable *Judgment* be passed upon them. Upon these considerations, the Wisest of the Ancient Heathens believed and taught, that the Actions of every particular Person should all be strictly tried and examined after his Death, and he have accordingly a just and impartial sentence passed upon him : Which Doctrine though the Poets indeed wrapt up in Fables and obscure Riddles, yet the wisest of the Philosophers had a better notion of it, and more agreeable to Reason. *From this*

\* Ταύτης τ' δίκης ἔτε σὺ  
μήποτε, ἔτε εἰ ἀλλ' αἰσυχῆς  
γενόμενος ἐπιδέξῃ παύσει  
ἔσθαι δεῖν. .... Οὐ γὰρ ἀμε-  
ληθήσῃ πολὺ ὑπὸ αὐτῆς. ἔχ  
ἔτι σμικρὸς ὢν δύστην τὸ τ'  
γῆς βάθος· ἐδ' ὑψηλὸς γεν-  
όμενος εἰς τ' ἔρπον ἀναπλή-  
σῃ· τίσεις δ' αὐτῶν τ' περὶ  
κέρων πρῶτα, εἴτ' ἐνθάδε  
μύρον. εἴτε καὶ ἐν αἰεὶ διαπο-  
ρεῖταις. *Plato de Legib. lib.*  
*10.*

*Judgment*, saith \* *Plato*,  
*let no Man hope to be able*  
*to escape : For though you*  
*could descend into the very*  
*Depth of the Earth, or flie*  
*on high to the extremities*  
*of the Heavens ; yet should*  
*you never escape the just*  
*Judgment of the Gods, ei-*  
*ther before, or after Death.*

An expression very agree-  
able to that of the Psalmist, *Psal.* 139.  
8, 9.

These, I say, are very good and  
strong arguments for the great probabi-  
lity of a *Future State* : But That drawn  
from the consideration of the Moral  
Attri-



Attributes of God, seems to amount even to a Demonstration.

V. *Though the necessity and indispensableness of all the great and moral Obligations of Natural Religion, and also the Certainty of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, be thus in general deducible, even demonstrably, by a chain of clear and undeniable reasoning: Yet (in the present State of the World, by what means soever it came originally to be so corrupted, the particular Circumstances whereof could not Now be certainly known but by Revelation;) such is the Carelessness, Inconsiderateness, and Want of Attention of the greater part of mankind; so many the Prejudices and false Notions taken up by evil Education; so strong and violent the unreasonable Lusts, Appetites, and Desires of Sense; and so great the Blindness, introduced by Superstitious Opinions, vitious Customs, and debauched Practises through the World; that very Few are able, in reality and effect, to discover these things clearly and plainly for themselves; but Men have great need of particular Teaching, and much Instruction; to convince them of the Truth, and Certainty, and Importance of these things; to give them a due Sense, and clear and*

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*just Apprehensions concerning them; and to bring them effectually to the Practise of the plainest and most necessary Duties.*

*Men hindered from discovering and understanding religious Truths, by Carelesness and Want of Attention.*

I. There is naturally in the greater part of Mankind, such a prodigious *Carelesness, Inconsiderateness, and Want of Attention*; as not only hinders them from making use of their Reason, in such manner as to discover these things *clearly and effectually* for themselves; but is the cause of the *grosslest and stupidest Ignorance* imaginable. Some seem to have little or hardly any Notion of God at all; and, More take little or no care to frame *just and worthy Apprehensions* concerning him, concerning the Divine Attributes and Perfections of his Nature; and still many More are entirely negligent and heedless, to consider and discover what may be his *Will*. Few make a due use of their Natural Faculties, to distinguish rightly the essential and unchangeable *Difference* between *Good* and *Evil*; Fewer yet, so attend to the natural Notices which God has given them, as by their own Understanding to collect, that What is *Good* is the express *Will and Command* of God, and what is *Evil* is *Forbidden* by him; And still Fewer consider with themselves the *Weight and Importance* of these Things,

the

the natural *Rewards or Punishments* that are frequently annexed in *this Life* to the Practise of Virtue or Vice, and the much greater and certainer *Difference* that shall be made betwixt them in a *Life to come*. Hence it is, that (as Travellers assure us) even some whole Nations seem to have very little Notion of God, or at least very poor and unworthy apprehensions concerning him; and a very small Sense of the Obligations of Morality; and very mean and obscure Expectations of a Future State: Not that God has any where *left himself* wholly *without Witness*; or that the Difference of Good and Evil, is to any rational Being undiscernible; or that Men at any Time or in any Nation, could ever be firmly and generally persuaded in their own Minds, that they perished absolutely at Death: But through *Supine Negligence and Want of Attention*, they let their Reason (as it were) sleep, and \* are deaf to the Dictates of common Understanding, and, like Brute Beasts, minding only the things that are before their Eyes, never consider any thing that is abstract from Sense, or beyond their present private temporal Interest. And it

\* Multis signis natura declarat quid velit: — obfurdescimus tamen nescio quo modo, nec audimus  
*Cic. de Amicit.*



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were well, if, even in civilized Nations, this was not, very nearly, the case of too many Men, when left entirely to themselves, and void of particular Instruction.

*And by  
early pre-  
judices and  
false No-  
tions.*

2. The greater part of Mankind are not only *Unattentive*, and barely *Ignorant*; but commonly they have also, through a careless and evil Education, taken up *early Prejudices*, and many *vain and foolish Notions*; which pervert their natural Understanding, and hinder them from using their Reason in *moral Matters* to any effectual purpose. This cannot be better described, than in the Words of Cicero: *If we had come into*

† Si talis nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri & perspicere, eaq; optima duce cursum vitæ conficere possemus; haud esset sane quod quisquam rationem & doctrinam requireret, cum natura sufficeret. Nunc vero &c. *Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. 3.*

*the World, saith † he, in such circumstances, as that we could clearly and distinctly have discerned Nature her self, and have been able in the course of our Lives to follow her true and*

Nunc parvulos nobis dedit igniculos, quos celeriter malis moribus opinionibusq; depravatis sic restringimus, ut nusquam *Nature lumen appareat*. — Simul atq; editi in Lucem & suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate, & in summa opinionum perversitate versamur; ut pene cum lacte matricis, errorem suxisse videamur. Cum vero parentibus redditi, id est, magistris traditi sumus, tum ita variis imbuimur erroribus, ut vanitati veritas, & opinioni confirmata natura ipsa cedat. — Cum vero accedit eodem, quasi maximus quidem magister, populus, atq; omnis undiq; ad vitia consentiens multitudo; tum plane inficimur opinionum pravitate, a naturaq; ipsa desciscimus. *ibid.*

uncorrupted Directions ; this alone might have been sufficient, and there would have been little need of Teaching and Instruction : But now Nature has given us only some small Sparks of right Reason, which we so quickly extinguish with corrupt Opinions and evil Practises, that the true Light of Nature no where appears : As soon as we are brought into the World, immediately we dwell in the midst of all Wickedness, and are surrounded with a number of most perverse and foolish Opinions ; so that we seem to suck in Errour even with our Nurses Milk : Afterwards, when we return to our Parents, and are committed to Tutors ; then we are further stocked with such Variety of Errours, that Truth becomes perfectly overwhelmed with Vanity ; and the most natural Sentiments of our Minds are entirely stifled with confirmed Follies : But when after all this, we enter upon Business in the World, and make the Multitude, conspiring everywhere in Wickedness, our great Guide and Example ; then our very Nature it self is wholly transformed, as it were, into corrupt Opinions. A livelier Description of the present corrupt estate of Humane Nature, is not easily to be met with.

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And by sensual Appetites, Passions, and worldly Business.

3. In the generality of Men, the *Appetites and Desires of Sense* are so violent and importunate ; the *Business and the Pleasures* of the World, take up so much of their time ; and their *Passions* are so very strong and unreasonable ; that, of Themselves, they are very backward and unapt to employ their Reason and fix their Attention upon moral Matters ; and still more backward to apply themselves to the Practise of them.

The Love of Pleasure, is (as Aristotle elegantly \* expresses it) so *nourished up* with us from our very *Childhood*, and so *incorporated* (as it were) into the whole course of

\* Ἐτι ὅ ἐκ νηπίε πασιν  
ἡμῖν σωτέρεσθαι [ἡδονή]  
διὸ καὶ χαλεπὸν ἀποταλάσθαι  
τὸ τοιοῦτον, ἐκ κεχρωσμέ-  
νον τῷ βίῳ. Aristot. Ethic.  
lib. 2. c. 2.

our Lives ; that it is very difficult for Men to withdraw their Thoughts from Sensual Objects, and fasten them upon things remote from Sense : And if perhaps they do attend a little, and begin to see the reasonableness of governing themselves by a higher Principle, than mere

+ Vicia de Sense and Appetite ; yet with such † Va-

mercede  
solicitant : Avaritia pecuniam promittit : Luxuria multas ac varias voluptates : Ambitio purpuram & p'ausum : & ex hoc potentiam & quicquid potentia ponit. Senec. Epist. 59.

Τὸ δὲ ὅ ἴσμεν, ὅτι ταῦτα τὰ πάντα ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεύει ἢ μένειν διὰ πυνὲς ἐνέσσει, παῶσι τ' ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀνδραγαστῶν, ἐναντία ἔσται ἐπ' ἐναντίας περὶ ζῆς. Plato de Legib. lib. 1.

riety



riety of Temptations are they perpetually incompassed, and continually solicited; and the Strength of Passions and Appetites, makes so great Opposition to the Motions of Reason; that commonly they yield and submit to practise those things which at the same time the Reason of their own Mind || condemns; and *what they allow not, That they Do.*

|| — Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor.

Which Observation is so true of too great a part of Mankind, that Plato upon this Ground declares

\* *all Arts and Sciences to have in his Opinion less of difficulty in them, than that of making Men Good; Insomuch that, it † is well, saith he, if Men can come to attain a right Sense, and just and true Notions of Things, even by that time they arrive at old Age.*

\* Εδοξε δὲ καὶ νῦν εἶπε δεῦν, τα μὲν ἄλλα ἐπιτηδεύματα πάντα, ἢ σφόδρα χαλεπὰ εἶναι τὸ δὲ πᾶσι τρόπον χρὴ γίγνεσθαι χρηστὸν ἀνθρώπων, παρῆλεπον. Plato in Epinomide.

† Φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας δόξας βέλαιεν, ἀπὸ τῶν ὅτων καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο. Id. de Legib. lib. 2.

4. But that which above all other things, most depraves Mens natural Understanding, and hinders them from discerning and judging rightly of Moral Truths, is this; That as stupid and careless Ignorance leads them into fond and superstitious Opinions, and the Ap-  
petites

petites of Sense overcome and tempt them into Practices contrary to their conscience and judgment; so on the reverse, the multitude of *superstitious Opinions, vitious Habits, and debauched Practices*, which prevail in all Ages through the greater part of the World, do reciprocally increase Mens gross Ignorance, Carelesness and Stupidity, False and unworthy Notions of God, or Superstitious Apprehensions concerning him, which Men carelessly and inconsiderately happen to take up at first; do (as it were) blind the Eyes of their Reason for the future, and hinder them from discerning what of it self originally was easy enough to be discovered. *That which may be known of God, has been manifest enough unto Men in all Ages; for God hath shewed it unto them: For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal Power and Godhead: So that they who are ignorant of him, cannot but be without excuse. But notwithstanding all the Heathen World had so certain means of knowing God; yet generally they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain*

Rom. I,  
19, &c.

*vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned ; And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into Images of the meanest and most contemptible Creatures ; and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever : The natural Consequence of which absurd Idolatry, and also the just Judgment of God upon them for it, was, that they were given up to a reprobate Mind, to Uncleanneſs and to all vile Affections to ſuch a degree, that not only their common Practiſes, but even their moſt Sacred Rites and Religious Performances, became themſelves the extremeſt Abominations. And when Mens Morals are thus corrupted, and they run with greedineſs into all exceſs of Riot and Debauchery ; then, on the other hand, by the ſame natural Conſequence, and by the ſame juſt Judgment of God, both their Vicious Cuſtoms and Actions, as well as Superſtitious Opinions, reciprocally increaſe the Blindneſs of their Hearts, darken the Judgment of their Underſtandings, ſtupify and ſear their Conſciences ſo as to become paſt feeling, and by degrees*

Ephes. 4, 18 and 19.  
\* Juſtos natura eſſe factos,

— tantam autem eſſe corruptelam malæ conſuetudinis, ut ab ea tanquam igniculi extinguantur a natura dati; exorianturq; & confirmantur vitia contraria. Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.



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tinguish wholly that *Light of Nature* in their own Minds, which was given them originally to inable them to discern between *Good* and *Evil*.

Wherefore  
Men have  
great need  
to be  
taught and  
instructed  
in matters  
of Religion.

By these means it comes to pass, that though the great *Obligations* and the principal *Motives* of Morality, are indeed certainly discoverable and demonstrable by right Reason; and all considerate Men, when those Motives and Obligations are fairly proposed to them, must of Necessity (as has been fully proved in the foregoing Heads) yield their Assent to them as certain and undeniable Truths; yet under the disadvantages now mentioned, (as it is the case of most Men to fall under some or other of them,) very Few are of *Themselves* Able, in reality and effect, to discover those Truths clearly and plainly for themselves; But most Men have great need of particular *Teaching* and much *Instruction*, not without some weight of *Authority* as well as Reason and Perswasion;

157. To raise and stir up their *Attention*; to move them to shake off their habitual Carelesness, Stupidity and Inconsiderateness; to perswade them to make use of their natural Reason and Under-

Understanding, and to apply their minds to apprehend and study the Truth and Certainty of these Things. For, as Men, notwithstanding all the Rational Faculties they are by nature indued with, may yet through mere Neglect and Incogitancy be grossly and totally ignorant of the plainest and most obvious Mathematical Truths: So Men may also, for want of Consideration, be very ignorant of some of the plainest moral Obligations, which, as soon as distinctly proposed to them, they cannot possibly avoid giving their Assent unto.

2. To give them a due *Sense*, and right and just *Apprehensions* concerning these things; to convince them of the great *Concern* and vast *Importance* of them; to correct the false Notions, vain Prejudices, and foolish Opinions, which deprave their Judgment; and to remove that Levity and Heedlessness of Spirit, which makes Men frequently to be in their practise very little influenced by what in abstract Opinion they may seem firmly to Believe. For there are many Men, who will think themselves highly injured, if any one should make any doubt of their Believing the  
indif-

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indispensable Obligations of Morality, and the certainty of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments ; who yet in their Lives and Actions, seem to have upon their Minds but a very small sense of the Weight and infinite Importance of these great Truths.

3. To *Inculcate* these things frequently upon Them, and press them effectually to the practise of the plainest and most necessary Duties ; to perswade them to moderate those Passions, to subdue those Lusts, to conquer those Appetites, to despise those Pleasures of Sense, and (which is the greatest Difficulty of all) to reform and correct those vitious Customs and evil Habits, which tempt and hurry them too often into the commission of such things, as they are convinced at the same time, in the Reason of their own Minds, ought not to be practised. For 'tis very possible Men may both clearly understand their Duty, and also be fully convinced of the reasonableness of practising it ; and yet at the same time, find a *Law in their members, warring and prevailing against the Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin* and

Rom. 7, 23.



and Death. Men \* may be pleased with the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and have some faint inclinations and even resolutions to practise it ; and yet at the return of their Temptations, constantly fall back into their accustomed Vices ; if the great Motives of their Duty be not very frequently and very strongly inculcated upon them, so as to make very deep and lasting impressions upon their Minds ; and they have not some greater and higher Assistances afforded them, than the bare Conviction of their own speculative Reason.

For these Reasons, I say, it is absolutely necessary, that notwithstanding the natural Demonstrableness both of the Obligations and Motives of Morality, yet, considering the manifest corruptness of the present Estate Humane Nature is in, the generality of Men must not by any means be left wholly to the workings of their own Minds, to the use of their natural Faculties, and to the bare convictions of their own Reason ; but must be particularly *Taught and In-*  
*structed*

\* Quidam ad magnificas voces excitantur, & transeunt in affectum dicentium, alacres vultu & animo. Rapiunt illos instigatq; rerum pulchritudo. — Juvat protinus quæ audias, tacere. Afficiuntur illi, & sunt quales jubentur, si illa animo forma permaneat, si non imperum insignem protinus populus honesti dissuasor excipiat. Pauci illam quantum conceperant mentem, domum perferre potuerunt. *Senec. epist. 109.*

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*structed* in their Duty, must have the Motives of it frequently and strongly pressed and inculcated upon them with great Weight and Authority, and must have many extraordinary Assistances afforded them; to keep them effectually to the Practise of the great and plainest Duties of Religion.

*The great Use and Necessity of an Order of Preachers.*

And hence we may, by the by, justly observe the exceeding great Use and Necessity that there is, of establishing an *Order* or Succession of Men, whose peculiar Office and continual Employment it may be, to Teach and Instruct People in their Duty, to press and exhort them perpetually to the Practise of it, and to be Instruments of conveying to them extraordinary Assistances for that purpose. To which excellent Institution, the right and worthy Notion of God and his Divine Perfections, the just Sense and Understanding of the great Duties of Religion, and the universal Belief and due Apprehension of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments; which the generality even of the meaner and more ignorant sort of People among us, are now Possessors of; is manifestly and undeniably almost wholly owing: As I shall have Occasion

Occasion hereafter more particularly to Observe.

VI. *Though in almost every Age there have indeed been in the Heathen World some wise and brave and good Men, who have made it their business to study and practise the Duties of natural Religion Themselves, and to teach and exhort Others to do the like ; who seem therefore to have been raised up by providence, as Instruments to reprove in some measure and put some kind of check to the extreme superstition and wickedness of the Nations wherein they lived : Yet none of these have ever been able to reform the World, with any considerably great and universal success ; Because they have been but very Few, that have in earnest set themselves about this excellent work ; and they that have indeed sincerely done it, have themselves been intirely ignorant of some doctrines, and very doubtful and uncertain of others, absolutely necessary for the bringing about that great end ; and those things which they have been certain of and in good measure understood, they have not been able to prove and explain clearly enough ; and those that they have been able both to prove and explain by sufficiently*



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*ficiently clear reasoning, they have not yet had Authority enough to inforce and inculcate upon Mens minds with so strong an impressi<sup>o</sup>n, as to influence and govern the general pra<sup>c</sup>tise of the World.*

I. There have indeed in almost every Age been in the Heathen World, some Wise and Brave and Good Men, who have made it their Business to study and practise the Duties of natural Religion *Themselves*, and to teach and exhort *Others* to do the like. An eminent Instance whereof, in the Eastern Nations, the Scripture it self affords us in the History of *Job* ; concerning whom it does not certainly appear, that he knew any positive revealed Institution of Religion, or that, before his Sufferings, any immediate Revelation was made unto him, as there was to *Abraham* and the rest of the Patriarchs. Among the Greeks *Socrates* seems to be an extraordinary Example of this kind. Concerning whom *Plato* tells us, in his *Apolo-  
gy*, that \* he did nothing else, but go continually about, perswading both

\* οὐδέν  
ἄλλο  
πράττειν

ἐν ᾧ πεύεργον, ἢ παιδῶν ὑμῶν καὶ νεωτέρων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων, μήτε  
ποιμάτων επιμελῆσθαι, μήτε χρημάτων πρῶτον, μήτε ἄλλου πνός  
ἔγω σφόδρα, ὡς τὸ ψυχῆς, ὅπως ὡς εἰση ἔσται λέγων ὅτι ἐκ ἐκ χρη-  
μάτων ἢ ἀρετῇ γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρετῆς χρήματα καὶ τὰλλα ταχέως  
ταῖς ἐνδεέστοις ἀπορία, καὶ ἰδία καὶ δημοσία. *Plato in Apol. Socrat.*

old

old and young, not to be so much solicitous to gratifie the Appetites of the Body, or to heap up Wealth, or to raise themselves to Honour, or gain any outward Advantage whatsoever; as to improve the Mind by the continual Exercise of all Virtue and Goodness: Teaching them, that a Man's true Value did not arise from his Riches, or from any outward Circumstances of Life; but that true Riches, and every real Good, whether publick or private, proceeded wholly from Virtue. After him, *Plato* and *Aristotle* and Others followed his Example, in teaching Morality. And among the Romans, *Cicero*; and in latter times, *Epicetus* and *Antoninus*, and several others, gave the World admirable Systems of Ethicks, and noble moral Instructions and Exhortations, of excellent Use and Benefit to the Generations wherein they lived, and deservedly of great value and esteem even unto this Day.

2. So that, I think, it may very justly be supposed, that these Men were raised up and designed by Providence, (the abundant Goodness of God having never left it self wholly without Witness, notwithstanding the greatest

*Who seem  
to have  
been designed  
by  
Providence  
to bear Witness  
against  
the Wickedness of  
the Nations where-  
in they li-  
ved.*

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corruptions and provocations of Man-  
kind,) as Instruments to reprove in some  
measure and put some kind of check to  
the extreme Superstition and Wicked-  
ness of the Nations wherein they lived,  
or at least to bear Witness against and  
condemn it. Concerning *Job*, the case  
is evident and confessed: And, for the  
same reason, some of the Antientest  
Writers of the Church have not scrupled

† Καὶ οἱ μὲν λόγους βίωσαν-  
τες, χρειστάνοις εἰσι, καὶ ἄλλοι  
ἐνομίσθησαν· οἷον ἐν Ἑλλήσι  
μὲν Σωκράτης καὶ Ἡράκλει-  
τος, καὶ οἱ ὅμοιοι αὐτοῖς· ἐν  
Βαρβάροις δὲ Ἀβραάμ, &c.  
*Justin Apolog. 2.*

\* Τάχα δὲ καὶ προηγουμένως  
τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐδόθη ἡ φιλοσο-  
φία τότε, πρὶν ἢ τον κύριον  
καλέσαι καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνισ-  
μοῦ ἐπιμαρτυροῦν καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ  
Ἑλληνικόν, ὡς ὁ νόμος τοῦ  
Εβραίου, εἰς Χριστόν. προ-  
παροδικάζει τὴν καὶ φιλο-  
σοφίαν, προοδικοῦσα τὴν  
χειρὸς τελειότητα. *Clem.  
Alexand. Strom. 1.*

|| Ὁ Θεὸς δὲ αὐτοῖς παύ-  
σα, καὶ ὅσα καλῶς λέλεκται,  
ἐφανεώσατο. *Orig. Advers.  
Cels. lib. 6.*

to † call even *Socrates* al-  
so, and some others of the  
best of the *Heathen* Mora-  
lists, by the name of *Chri-*  
*stians*; and to affirm, that  
\* as the Law was as it were  
a *Schoolmaster* to bring the  
*Jews* unto *Christ*, so true  
moral Philosophy was to the  
*Gentiles* a preparative to  
receive the Gospel. This  
perhaps was carrying the  
matter somewhat too far:  
But to be sure, thus much  
we may safely assert, that  
|| whatever any of these  
Men were at any time en-

abled to deliver *Wisely* and *Profitably*  
and *Agreeably* to Divine Truth, was, as  
a *Light* shining in a dark Place, derived  
to



to them by a Ray of that infinite overflowing Goodness, which *does good* to all even both *just and unjust*; from God the sole Author of all Truth and Wisdom; And That for some Advantage and Benefit of the rest of the World, even in its blindest and most corrupt Estate.

3. But then, notwithstanding the most that can be made of this Supposition, 'tis certain the *Effect* of all the teaching and instruction even of the best of the Philosophers in the Heathen World, was in comparison very small and inconsiderable. They never were able to reform the World with any great and universal success, nor to keep together any considerable number of Men in the knowledge and practise of true Virtue. With respect to the Worship of God, *Idolatry* prevailed universally in all Nations; and notwithstanding that Men did indeed *know God*, so as to be *without excuse*, yet they *did not like to retain him in their knowledge*, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish Heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into Images of the vilest Creatures;

But yet none of these Men were ever able to reform the World with any considerable success.

Rom. 1, 21, & 28.

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and no Philosophers ever turned any great number of Men from this absurd Idolatry, to the acknowledgment and Worship of the only true God. In respect of Mens dealings one with another; Honour, and Interest, and Friendship, and Laws, and the Necessities of Society, did indeed cause *Justice* to be practised in many Heathen Nations to a great degree; But very few Men among them were Just and Equitable upon right and true Principles, a due Sense of Virtue, and a constant Fear and Love of God. With respect to themselves, *Intemperance* and *Luxury* and unnatural *Uncleanness* was commonly practised, even in the most civilized Countries; and This not so much in Opposition to the Doctrine of the Philosophers, as by the consent indeed and encouragement of too great a part of them. I shall not enlarge upon this ungrateful and melancholy subject: There are Accounts enough extant, of the universal corruption and debauchery of the Heathen World: St *Pauls* Description of it, in the whole first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, is alone sufficient; and

\* the

\* the Complaints of their own Writers, abundantly confirm it. The Disciples of the best Moralists, at least the Practisers of their Doctrine, were, in their own Life-time, *very † few*; as too plainly appears from the evil Treatment, which that great Man *Socrates* met withal at *Athens*: And at their Deaths, their Doctrine in great measure died with them; not having any sufficient evidence or Authority to support it. And their Followers quickly fell back into the common Idolatry, Superstition, Uncleanneſs and Debauchery. Of which, the Character that the *Roman* Writers give of those that called themselves the Disciples of *Socrates*, is a particular and remarkable Instance. These considerations (so very early did they appear to be true) affected in such a manner that great admirer of *Socrates*, *Plato*; that he sometimes seems to give over all Hopes of working any Reformation

\* *Egregium sanctumq; virum si cerno, bimembri Hoc monstrum puero, vel miranti sub aratro Piscibus inventis, & fætæ comparo mulæ.*

*Juvenal Sat. 13.*

See also the places cited a little below.

† *Sint licet perhonesti; — sed audire deposcimus quot sint aut fuerint numero. — Unus, Duo, Tres. — At genus humanum non ex bonis pauculis, sed ex cæteris omnibus æstimari convenit. Arnob. advers. Gentes lib. 2.*

*Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, efrænatuſ; pauciſſimis Dei verbis tam placidum, quam ovem, reddam. Da libidinosum, &c. — Numquid hæc Philosophorum aut unquam præstitit, aut præstare, si velit, potest? Laëtant. lib. 3.*

*Παρά μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εἰς τὴν Φαίδων, καὶ ἐκ οὗτου εἰ δὲ περὶ, &c. Origen. advers. Cels. lib. 1.*



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mation in Men by Philosophy ; and

\* Ταῦτα λογισμῶ λαβὼν,  
ἡσυχίαν ἔχων, καὶ τὰ αὐτῶν  
πράγματα οἷον ἐν χειμῶνι κοι-  
νοῦ καὶ ἰσότητος ὑπὸ πνέμα-  
τι φερόμενος, ὑπὸ τοιχείον  
ἵσταται, ὁρῶν τὰ ἄλλα κα-  
ταπιπταμένους ἀνομίαις, ἀγα-  
πῇ δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ διατριβῇ καὶ  
καὶ ἀνοσίῳ ἔχων, τὸν τε ἐν-  
θάδε βίον βιώσεται, καὶ ὅτι  
ἀπαλλαγὴν αὐτῷ καὶ καλῆς  
ἐλπίδος ἰλαῶς καὶ εὐμενῆς  
ἀπαλλήξεταί. Plato de Re-  
publ. lib. 6.

says, that \* a good Man, when he considers these Things, would even choose to sit quiet, and shift for himself ; like a Man that in a violent Hurricane, creeps under a Wall for his Defense ; and seeing the whole World round about him filled with all manner of Wickedness, be content if,

preserving his single Self from Iniquity and every evil Work, he can pass away the present Life in Peace, and at last Die with Tranquility and good Hope. And indeed, for many Reasons, it was altogether impossible, that the Teaching of the Philosophers should ever be able to reform Mankind, and recover them out of their very degenerate and corrupt Estate, with any considerably great and universal Success.

Because  
they have  
been but  
very Few,  
that have  
in earnest  
set them-  
selves a-  
bout that  
excellent  
Work.

I. In the first place, Because the Number of those, who have in earnest set themselves about this excellent Work, have been exceeding Few. Philosophers indeed, that called themselves so, there were enough in every place, and in every Age : But those who truly made

it

it their business to improve their Reason to the height ; to free themselves from the Superstition, which overwhelmed the whole World ; to search out the Obligations of Morality, and the Will of God their Creator ; to obey it sincerely themselves, as far as they could discover it by the Light of Nature ; and to encourage and exhort others to do the like ; were but a *very few Names*. The Doctrine of far the greatest part of the Philosophers, consisted plainly in nothing but Words, and Subtilty, and Strife, and empty Contention ; and did not at all amend even their own Manners ; much less was fitted to reform the World. *Their Scholars*, as Aristotle † excellently describes them, *thought themselves bravely improved in Philosophy, and that they were become gallant Men, if they did but hear and understand and learn to dispute about Morality ; though it had no effect at all, nor influence upon their Manners : Just as if a sick Man should expect to be healed, by hearing a*

† Ἄλλ' οἱ πολλοὶ ταῦτα μὲν  
ἔπραττον· ὅτι ὃ τ' λόγον  
καταφύροντες οἰοῦνται φιλο-  
σοφεῖν, καὶ ἔτι τὸ ἐσθλὸν ἀπαρ-  
οῖ· ὁμοίον τι ποιεῖντες τοῖς κα-  
μνέουσιν, οἱ δὲ ἰατρῶν ἀκέραι-  
ον ἐπιμαλῶς, ποιεῖσι δ' ἐθὲν  
ἢ προσασαομένων ὥσπερ ἐν  
ἐθ' ἐκείνοι δ' ἐξέσι τὸ σώμα.  
ἔτι δὲ δευαπλόουσι· ἐθ' ἔτι δὲ  
τ' ψυχῇ, καὶ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖντες.  
Aristot. Ethic. lib. 2. cap. 3.

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*Physician discourse ; though he never followed any of his Directions : Undoubtedly, saith he, the Mind of the one, was exactly as much improved by such Philosophy ; as the Health of the others Body, by such Physick. And no wonder the generality of the common Hearers judged of their own Improvement in Philosophy, by such false measures ; when the enormous Vitiousness of the Lives of the Philosophers themselves, made*

\* Inciufos [Philosophos] in Angulis, facienda præcipere, quæ ne ipsi quidem faciunt qui loquuntur ; & quoniam se a veris actibus removerunt, apparet eos exercendæ lingue causa, vel advocandi gratia, artem ipsam Philosophiæ reperisse. *La-  
Eant. lib. 3.*

it plainly appear that \* their Art was not so much intended and fitted for the Reformation of Mens Manners, as to be an *Exercise of Wit and Subtilty*, and an *Instrument of Vain Glory*. Excepting perhaps *Socrates* and *Plato*, and some o-

thers of that Rank ; this Account is too plainly true of the greater part of the Philosophers. The Argument is too unpleasant, to instance in particulars. Whoever pleases, may in *Dio-  
genes Laertius* and other Writers, find Accounts enough, of the lewdness and unnatural Vices of most of the Philosophers. *It is a shame for Us, so much as to speak of those Things, which*  
wer'



were done of them, not only *in secret*, but even in the most publick manner. I shall here only add the Judgment of Cicero; a Man as able to pass a Right Judgment in this matter, as ever lived:

*Do you think*, says † he, *that these Things*, [meaning the Precepts of Morality] *had any influence upon those Men*, (excepting only a very few of them,) *who taught, and writ, and disputed about them?* No; *Who is there of all the Philosophers, whose Mind and Life and manners were conformable to right Reason?* *who ever made his Philosophy to be the Law and*

*Rule of his Life, and not a mere Boast and Show of his Wit and Parts?* *who observed his own Instructions, and lived in obedience to his own Precepts?* On the contrary; many of them were Slaves to filthy Lusts, many to Pride, many to Covetousness, &c.

2. Those few extraordinary Men of

And those few of the Philosophers, who did indeed sincerely endeavour to reform Mankind, were yet themselves entirely ignorant of some Doctrines absolutely necessary to the bringing about that great End.

† Sed hæc eadem numcenses apud eos ipsos valere, nisi admodum paucos, a quibus inventa, disputata, conscripta sunt? Quotus enim quisq; Philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus, ut ratio postulat; qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet; qui obtemperet ipse sibi, & decretis suis pareat? videre licet multos, libidinum servos, &c. Cic. Tusculan. Question. lib. 2.

the

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the Philosophers, who did indeed in good measure sincerely Obey the Laws of natural Religion Themselves, and made it their chief business to instruct and exhort Others to do the same; were yet *Themselves entirely Ignorant* of some Doctrines absolutely necessary to the bringing about this great End of the reformation and recovery of Mankind.

*In general* : Having no knowledge of the whole Scheme, Order, and State of Things, the Method of Gods governing the World, his Design in Creating Mankind, the original Dignity of Humane Nature, the Ground and Circumstances of Mens present corrupt Condition, the Manner of the Divine Interposition necessary to their recovery, and the Glorious End to which God intended finally to conduct them: Having no knowledge, I say, of all This; their whole Attempt to discover the Truth of Things, and to instruct

others therein, was \* like wandering in the wide Sea, without knowing whither they were to go, or which way they were to take, or having any Guide to

\* Errant ergo velut in Mari magno, nec quo ferantur, intelligunt; gaia nec viam cernunt, nec duccem sequuntur. *Lactant.* lib. 6.

to conduct them. And accordingly

† the Wifest of them were never backward to confess their own ignorance and great blindness : *that* Truth || was hid from them, as it were in an unfathomable Deep : *that* \* they were much in the Dark, and very dull and stupid, not only as to the profounder things of Wisdom, but as to such things also, which seemed very capable of being in great part discovered : nay, *that* even † those things, which in themselves were of all others the most Manifest, (that is, which, whenever *Made known*, would appear most obvious and evident,) their natural Understanding was of it self as unqualified to find out and apprehend, as the Eyes of Bats to behold the Light of the Sun : *that* the very first and most necessary thing of all, || the Nature and Attributes of God himself were, notwithstanding all the general Helps of Reason,

† Ex cæteris Philosophis, nonne optimus & gravissimus quisq; confitetur, multa se ignorare ; & multa sibi etiam atq; etiam esse discenda ? Cic. *Tusc. Quest.*

3. || Εν βύθῳ ἀλύτῳ.

\* Tui ergo te, Cicero, libri arguunt, quam nihil a philosophia disci possit ad vitam. Hæc tua verba sunt : *Mihi autem non modo ad sapientiam cæci videmur ; sed ad ea ipsa, quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videntur, hebetes & obtusi.* Lactant. lib. 3.

† Ὡς οὖν καὶ τὰ ἤνυκτείδων ὄμματα πρὸς τὸ φέγγος ἔχει τὸ μεθ' ἡμέραν, ἔτι καὶ τ' ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων. *Aristot. Metaphys.* lib. 2. c. 1.

|| Τὸν μὲν ἔν ποιητῶ καὶ πατέρα τοῦ τοῦ παντός, ἀρεῖν τ' ἔργον, καὶ εὐθύντα λέγειν εἰς πάντα ἀδύνατον. *Plato in Timæo.*

very



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Profecto eos ipsos, qui se aliquid certi habere arbitrantur, addubitare coget doctissimorum hominum de maxima re tanta dissensio. Cic. de Natura Deor. lib. 1.

\* Utinam tam facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere. Id. ibid.

† Ἐπεὶ ἐνθάδε μετ' ἐμῷ. ----- Καί τις δισβατός ἦν ὁ τὸ πᾶν φαίνεται καὶ ἐπίστατος. ἔστιν ἂν ποτεῖνος καὶ δισδιερεύνητος. Plato de Republ. lib. 4.

|| See Plato in Apologia Socratis.

Particularly they were very ignorant in what manner God might be acceptably worshipped.

very difficult to them to find out in particular, and still more difficult to explain; it being much \* more easy, to say what God *was not*, than what he *was*: And finally, that the Method of

instructing Men effectually, and making them truly Wise and Good, was

a thing † very obscure and dark and difficult to be found out. In a word: *Socrates* himself always openly professed, that he pretended to be Wiser than

other Men, only in this one thing, that he was duly sensible of his own Ignorance, and || believed that it was merely for that very reason, that the Oracle pronounced him the wisest of Men.

More particularly: The Manner, in which God might be acceptably worshipped, These Men were entirely and unavoidably ignorant of. That God ought to be worshipped; is, in the general, as evident and plain from the Light of Nature, as any thing can be: But in what particular Manner, and with what Kind of Service he will be worshipped, cannot be certainly discovered by bare Reason. Obedience to the Obligations

of

of Nature, and Imitation of the Moral Attributes of God ; the wisest Philosophers easily knew, was undoubtedly the *most acceptable* service to God : But some *external Adoration* seemed also to be necessary ; and *how* this was to be performed, they could not with any certainty discover. Accordingly even the very best of them complied therefore generally with the Outward Religion of their Country, and advised others to do the same ; and so, notwithstanding all their wise discourses they fell lamentably into the practise of the most foolish Idolatry. *Socrates* himself,

\* at the Conclusion of one of the bravest discourses that ever was made by any Philosopher , superstitiously ordered a Sacrifice to be offered for him to *Æsculapius*. *Plato*, after having delivered very noble and almost divine Truths concerning the Nature and Attributes of the Supreme God, † weakly advises Men to

\* Εἰπεν, ὃ δὴ τελευτάου ἐφείγεσθαι. Ὡς κείτων, τὸ Ἀσκληπιῷ ὀφείλομεν ἀλεξτεῖν ὄνα· ἀλλὰ ἀπόδτε, καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσῃτε. *Plato in Phædone.*

Illud vero nonne summæ vanitatis ; quod ante mortem familiares suos rogavit, ut *Æsculapio* gallum, quem voverat, pro se sacrificium Lactant. lib. 3.

Unless perhaps he spake this in mockery of *Æsculapius*, looking upon Death as his truest Deliverance.

† Πρῶτον καὶ, φάμεν, πᾶς τὰς μετ' ὀλυμπίης τὴν καὶ τὰς τὴν πόλιν ἔχοντας θεὸς, τοῖς χθονίοις αὖ περ θεοῖς ἀρπα καὶ δευτέρα καὶ αἰσέρα νέμων, ὀρθότατα τὸ τὸ ὑπεβίας σκοπεῖν ψυχάνοι. --- Μετὰ θεὸς ὃ τὸ σθε, καὶ τοῖς δαίμονιν ἔγ' ἔμφρων ὀργιάζουσιν αὖν. --- Ἐπακολούθη δ' αὐτοῖς ἰδρύματα ἵδμεν τῶν θεῶν καὶ νόμον ὀργιάζοντα. *Plato de Leg. lib. 4.*

worship

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worship likewise Inferiour Gods, Demons, Spirits, and even Statues also and Images dedicated according to the Laws of their Country ; imagining that

|| Τὲς μὲν γὰρ οἱ θεῶν  
ὄρωντες σαφῶς, πρῶτον οἱ  
θεῶν εἰκόνας ἀγάλματα ἐδρυσά-  
μενοι, ἐς ἡμῶν ἀγάλλουσι,  
καὶ οὐκ ἀφύχες ὄντας, ἐκείνους  
ἠγάμεθα τὲς ἐμψύχους θεῶς  
πολλῶν διὰ ταύτην εὐνοίαν καὶ  
χαίρειν ἔχεν. *Plato de Legib.*  
*lib. 11.*

\* Τὰ Πλάτωνι ἐκ ἀπεί-  
δανως μὲν εἰρημέναι, ἐμὴ καὶ  
διέθεντο τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἀξίως  
καὶ αὐτῶν ἀναστροφῶν ἐν  
τῇ πρὸς τὴν ποικίλῃ οἱ ὅλων  
εὐσεβείᾳ, ὡς ἐχρῶν μὴ νο-  
θεύειν, μηδὲ μιᾶν τῇ εἰ-  
δωλολαβείᾳ. *Orig. advers.*  
*Cels. lib. 6.*

† A' Patribus acceptos  
Deos placet coli. *Cic. de*  
*Legib. lib. 2.*

|| Iam illud ex institutis  
Pontificum & Aruspicum  
non mutandum est, quibus  
hostiis immolandum cuique  
Deo. *Id. ibid.*

\* Nec sequor Magos Per-  
sarum, quibus auctoribus  
Xerxes inflammasse templa  
Græciæ dicitur, quod pa-

|| the Honour they paid to  
lifeless Idols, would pro-  
cure the Favour and good  
Will of Superiour Intelli-  
gences ; And so \* he cor-  
rupted and spoiled the best  
Philosophy in the World,  
by adding Idolatry to that  
Worship, which he had  
wisely and bravely before  
proved to be due to the  
Creatour of all Things. Af-  
ter him, *Cicero*, the greatest  
and best Philosopher that

produced, allowed † Men  
to continue the Idolatry of  
their Ancestors ; advised  
them || to conform them-  
selves to the superstitious  
Religion of their Country,  
in offering such Sacrifices

to different Gods, as were by Law ap-  
pointed ; and \* disapproves  
and finds fault with the  
*Persian* Magi, for burning  
the Temples of the *Græcian*  
Gods,



Gods, and asserting that the whole Universe was Gods Temple. In all which, he fondly contradicts himself, by † inexcusably complying with the Practises of those Men, whom in many of his Writings he largely and excellently proves to be extremely Foolish upon account of those very Practises. And to mention

no more, (for indeed those of a lower Rank, the *Minuter* Philosophers, as *Tully* calls them, are not worth the mentioning;) that admirable Moralist *Epictetus*, who, for a true Sense of Virtue, seems to have had no Superiour in the Heathen World; even He also || advises Men to offer Libations and Sacrifices to the Gods, every one according to the Religion and Custom of his Country.

But still more particularly; That which of all other things, these best and wisest of the Philosophers were most absolutely and unavoidably ignorant of; and yet which, of all other things,

rietibus includerent deos, quorum hic mundus omnis templum esset & domus. Melius Græci atq; nostri, qui, ut augerent pietatem in Deos, easdem illos, quas nos, urbes incolere voluerunt. *Id. ibid.*

† Video te, Cicero, terrena & manufacta venerari. Vana esse intelligis, & tamen eadem facis, quæ faciunt ipsi, quos ipse stultissimos confiteris. — Si libenter errant etiam ii, qui errare se sentiunt, quanto magis vulgus indoctum? *Lactant. lib. 2.*

|| Σπένδειν δὲ, καὶ θύειν, καὶ ἀπὸς χερσὶ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια, ἑκάστῳ προσήκει. *Epictet. cap. 38.*

And in what Method God would be reconciled to returning Sinners.

was

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was of the greatest Importance for Sinful Men to know ; was *The Method*, by which such as have erred from the right way, and have offended God, may yet again restore themselves to the Favour of God and to the Hopes of Happiness. From the consideration of the Goodness and Mercifulness of God, the Philosophers did indeed *very reasonably hope*, that God would show himself placable to Sinners, and might be some way reconciled : But *what Propitiation* he will accept, and in *what Manner* this reconciliation must be made, here Nature stops and expects with Impatience the aid of some particular Revelation. That God will receive returning Sinners, and accept of Repentance instead of perfect Obedience, *they cannot certainly know*, to whom he has not declared that he *will* do so : For though this be the most *probable* and *only* means of reconciliation, that Nature Suggests ; yet whether this will be alone sufficient ; or whether God will not require something further, for the Vindication of his Justice and of the Honour and Dignity of his Laws and Government, and for the expressing more effectually his Indignation against Sin, before he will

will restore Men to the Privileges they have forfeited ; they cannot be satisfactorily assured. For it cannot be positively proved from any of Gods Attributes, that he is *absolutely obliged* to pardon, to all Creatures, all Sins at all times, barely and immediately upon their Repenting. There arises therefore from Nature no *Sufficient* Comfort to Sinners, but an anxious and endless Solicitude about the means of appeasing the Deity. Hence those divers ways of Sacrificing, and numberless Superstitions, which over-spread the Face of the Heathen World ; but were so little satisfactory to the wiser part of Mankind, even in those times of darkness ; that the more considering Philosophers could not forbear frequently declaring, that \* they thought those Rites could avail little or nothing towards appeasing the wrath of a provoked God, or making their Prayers acceptable in his Sight ; but that something still seemed to them to be wanting, though they knew not what.

\* See Plato's Alcibiades 2, throughout.

And other Doctrines absolutely necessary in order to re-form mankind the best Philosophers

3. Some other Doctrines, absolutely necessary likewise to the bringing about this great End of the Reformation of Mankind ; though there was indeed so

were very doubtful and uncertain about.

Q

much



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much proof and evidence of the Truth of them to be drawn from Reason, as that the best Philosophers could not by any means be *entirely ignorant* of them; yet so much *doubtfulness, uncertainty, and unsteadiness*, was there in the Thoughts and Assertions of these Philosophers concerning them, as could

† Præterea nihil apud eos certi est, nihil quod a scientia veniat; — & nemo parer, quia nemo vult ad incertum laborare. *Lastant. lib. 3.*

not but † very much diminish their proper Effect and Influence upon the hearts and lives of Men. I instance in the *Immortality of the Soul*, the *Certain-*

*ty of a Future State*, and *the Rewards and Punishments to be distributed in a Life to come*. The Arguments, which may be drawn from Reason and from the Nature of things, for the Proof of these great Truths; seem really (as I have before shown) to come very little short of strict Demonstration: And accordingly the wisest Philosophers (as has likewise been shown before) did indeed sometimes seem to have reasoned themselves into a firm Belief of them, and to have been fully convinced of their Certainty and Reality; even so far as to apply them to excellent purposes and uses of Life. But then on  
the

the other hand, a Man cannot without some pity and concern of Mind observe, how strangely at other times the weight of the same Arguments seem to have slipped (as it were) out of their Minds; and with what wonderful *Diffidence*, *Wavering* and *Unsteadiness*, they discourse about the same Things. I do not here think it of any very great moment, that there were indeed some whole Sects of Philosophers, who absolutely denied the *Immortality of the Soul*, and peremptorily rejected all kind of Expectation of a *Life to come*; (Though to be sure, this could not but in some measure shock the *common People*, and make them entertain some suspicion about the strength of the Arguments used on the other side of the Question by Wiser Men: Yet, I say,) it cannot be thought of any very great moment, that some whole Sects of Philosophers did indeed absolutely deny the *Immortality of the Soul*; Because these Men were weak Reasoners in other matters also, and plainly low and contemptible Philosophers, in comparison of those greater Genius's we are now speaking of. But that which I now observe, and which I say cannot be observed without some pity and concern of mind,

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is this ; that even those Great Philosophers themselves, the very best and Wisest, and most Considerate of them, that ever lived ; notwithstanding the undeniable strength of the Arguments, which sometimes convinced them of the Certainty of a *Future State* ; did yet at other times express themselves with so much hesitancy and unsteadiness concerning it, as, without doubt, could not but extremely hinder the proper Effect and Influence, which that most important Consideration ought to have upon the Hearts and Lives of Men.

\* Ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀποθανόντων, ὑμῶν δὲ βιωσόμενων ὁπότερος ὁ ἡμῶν ἐργονταί ἐπὶ ἀμεινον πρῶτον, ἀδελφὸν παντὶ πλὴν ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ.  
Plato in Apolog. Socratis.

*I am now, said \* Socrates a little before his Death, about to leave this World ; and ye are still to continue in it : Which of us have the better Part allotted us, God*

*only knows ;* Meaning to express his Doubtfulness, whether he should have any Existence after Death, or not. And again, at the End of his most admirable discourse concerning the Immortality of the Soul ; *I would have you*

† Νῦν δὲ εὖ ἴσῃ ὅτι παρ' ἀνδρας ἔλπιζω ἀφίξειν ἀγαθός, καὶ τὸτο μὲν ἐκ ἀν πάνυ διίχρυσάμενος. Plato in Phæd.

*to know, said † he to his Friends who came to pay him their last Visit, that I have great Hopes I am now going*



going into the company of Good Men :  
Yet I would not be too peremptory and  
confident concerning it :

But || If Death be only as it  
were a Transmigration from  
hence into another place ;  
and those things, which are  
told us, be indeed true ;

that those who are Dead to Us, do all  
Live There ; Then &c. So likewise  
Cicero, speaking of the same Subject :

I will endeavour, faith \*  
he, to explain what you de-  
sire ; yet I would not have  
you depend upon what I shall  
say, as certain and infalli-  
ble ; But I may guess, as  
other Men do, at what shall  
seem most probable ; And  
further than this, I cannot pretend to go.

Again : Which of those two Opinions,  
faith † he, [that the Soul  
is mortal, or that it is im-  
mortal,] is True, God only  
knows ; Which of them is most

Probable, is a very great and difficult Que-  
stion. And again in the same Discourse,  
having brought all those excellent Argu-  
ments before-mentioned in proof of the  
Immortality of the Soul ; Yet we ought

|| 'Εἰ δ' αὖ ὅς τις ἀποδηϊῶσιν  
ἔστιν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθάδε εἰς  
ἄλλον τόπον, καὶ ἀδυνάτοι  
ἐσμέν, ὥς ἄρα ἐκεῖ εἰσι  
πάντες οἱ τεθνεώτες, &c.  
Plato in Apolog. Socrat.

\* Ea, quæ vis, ut pote-  
ro, explicabo ; nec tamen  
quasi Pythius Apollo, certa  
ut sint & fixa quæ dixerō ;  
set ut homunculus unus e  
multis probabilia conjectu-  
ra sequens. Ultra enim quo  
progrediar, quam ut verifi-  
millia videam, non habeo.  
Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. I.

† Harum sententiarum,  
quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis  
viderit ; quæ verisimillima,  
magna Questio est. Id. ibid.

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|| *Etsi nihil nimis oportet  
confidere. Movemur enim  
sæpe aliquo acute concluso :  
labamus mutamusq; senten-  
tiam clarioribus etiam in  
rebus ; in his est enim ali-  
qua obscuritas. Id. ibid.*

*not, saith || he, to be over-  
confident of it : For it often  
happens that we are strongly  
affected at first, with an a-  
cute Argument ; and yet, a  
little while after, stagger in  
our Judgment and alter our Opinion, even  
in clearer Matters than these ; For these  
Things must be confessed to have some ob-  
scurity in them. And again : I know not*

\* *Nescio quomodo, dum  
lego, assentior ; cum posui  
librum, & mecum ipse de  
immortalitate animorum  
capi cogitare, assensio om-  
nis illa elabatur. Id. ibid.*

*how, saith \* he, when I  
read the Arguments in  
proof of the Souls Immorta-  
lity, methinks I am fully  
convinced ; and yet after I  
have laid aside the Book, and  
come to think and consider of the Matter  
alone by my self, presently I find my self  
slipt again insensibly into my old Doubts.  
From all which it appears, that not-  
withstanding all the bright Arguments  
and acute Conclusions, and brave Say-  
ings of the best Philosophers ; yet Life*

† *Credebam facile opini-  
onibus magnorum virorum,  
rem gratissimam [anime  
immortalitatem] promittenti-  
um magis quam probantium.  
Senec. epist. 102.*

*Adeo omnis illa tunc sapientia Socratis, de industria venerat con-  
sultæ æquanimitatis, non de fiducia comperta veritatis. Tertullian.  
de Anima.*

*and Immortality were †  
not fully and satisfactorily  
brought to light by bare na-  
tural reason ; but Men still*

plainly

plainly stood in need of some farther and more complete Discovery.

4. Those things which the Philosophers were indeed the most *fully certain* of, and did in good measure *understand*; such as the *Obligations of Virtue*, and the *Will of God in matters of Morality*; yet they were never able to prove and explain clearly and distinctly enough, to Persons of all Capacities, in order to their complete conviction and reformation.

*And those things which they were indeed certain of, yet they were not able to prove and explain clearly and distinctly enough.*

*First*, because most of their discourses upon these Subjects, have been rather speculative and learned, nice and subtle disputes; than practical and universally useful Instructions. They proved, by strict and nice Argumentation, that the *Practise of Virtue is wise and reasonable and fit to be chosen*; rather than that 'tis of *plain, necessary and indispensable Obligation*; And were able to deduce the *Will of God*, only by such abstract and subtle Reasonings, as the generality of Men had by no means either Abilities or Opportunities to understand or be duly affected by. Their very Profession and manner of Life, led them to make their Philosophy rather

\* Profecto omnis istorum disputatio, quanquam uberrimos fontes virtutis & scientiæ contineat, tamen collata cum horum

[qui rempublicam gubernant] ætatis perfectisq; rebus, vereor ne non tantum videatur attulisse negotiis hominum utilitatis, quantum Oblationem quandam Otii. Cic. de Repub. fragm.



an Entertainment of leisure time, a Trial of Wit and Parts, an exercise of Eloquence, and of the Art and Skill of good speaking ; than an Endeavour to reform the Manners of Men, by showing them their plain and necessary Duty. And accordingly the Study of

† Est, inquit *Cicero*, philosophia paucis contenta judiciis, multitudinem consulto ipsa fugiens. — maximum itaq; argumentum est, philosophiam neq; ad sapientiam tendere, neq; ipsam esse sapientiam; quod mysterium ejus, barba tantum celebratur & pallio. *Lactant. lib. 3.*

it, was, as *Cicero* † himself observes, unavoidably confined to a Few, and by no means fitted for the bulk and common sort of Mankind ; who, as they cannot judge of the true strength of nice and abstract Arguments, so they

will always be suspicious of some fallacy in them. None || but

|| Ὅλως μὲν ὥντισεν ἡ φιλοσοφία, καὶ ἐπιτετηδευμένη Πλάτωνος λέξις, παρὶς ὧν ἢ τῶ ἐντελέστερον αἶμα καὶ θεωρητικῶς καὶ ἐποικισμένως τῶ πολλῶν διδασκάντων καὶ γραφάντων ἔστι γὰρ ἰδεῖν, ὅτι μὲν Πλάτωνα ἐν χειρὶ τῶ δεικνύοντος τῶ φιλοσοφῶν μόνον. *Orig. advers. Cels. lib. 6.*

Men of Parts and Learning, of Study and liberal Education, have been able to profit by the sublime Doctrine of *Plato*, or by the subtle disputations of other Philosophers; where

Ἀγχιώτερον εἰπὼν ὁ Ἰησῆς, Τῷ θελοντι τὴν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἀρετὴ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐντελέστερον κενήνηκε τὸν λόγον καὶ παρέστησεν ἕως εἰπὼν, ἢ ὡς ἐν τῷ Κεῖναι Πλάτων, ἔμειν ἀκέραιον ἰδεῖν ὁ δὲ αὖθις, ἀλλὰ μὴ οἱ τὰ ἐγκύκλιον περὶ τὴν σπουδὴν Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας μαθησθέντες. *Id. lib. 7.*

as the Doctrine of Morality, which is the Rule of Life and Manners, ought to be plain, easy and familiar, and suited fully to the Capacities of all Men. Secondly, Another Reason why the Philosophers were never able to *prove and explain clearly and distinctly enough*, even those things of which they were *the most Certain*, to Persons of all Capacities, in order to their complete conviction and reformation; was because they never were able to frame to themselves any complete, regular, and consistent System or Scheme of things; but the Truths which they taught,

were \* single and scattered, accidental as it were, and hit upon by chance, rather than by any Knowledge of the whole true state of Things; and consequently less universally convictive. Nothing could be more *Certain*, (as they all well knew,) than that *Virtue* was unquestionably

to be chosen, and the Practise of it to be recommended necessarily above all things; And yet they could never *clearly and satisfactorily* make out, upon *what Principles* original-  
ly

\* Οὐκ ὅπ' ἀλλότριά ἐστι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδαγματα τῆς Χειρὸς ἀλλ' ὅπ' ἐκ ἐστὶ πάντῃ ὁμοία, ὥστερ' εἰδὲ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων. — — — ἔχεις ὅτι πῆς, ἀπο μέρους τῆς περιγραπτικῆς τοῦ λόγου τὸ συλλογῆς ὁρῶν, καλῶς ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν. οἱ ὅτι τὰ ναντία αὐτοῖς ἐν κυριωτέροις εἰρηκότες ἐκ ἐπιστήμῳ πῶς ἀποπῆον καὶ γινώσκον τὴν ἀνέλεστον φαίνον ἐχέμεναι.

Justin. Apolog. 1.

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ly, and for *what End ultimately*, this Choice was to be made; and upon *what Grounds* it was universally to be sup-

† Nec, quid defendere debeant, scientes; nec quid refutare. Incurfantq; passim sine delectu omnia quæ asserunt, quicunq; dissentiant. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

ported. Hence they perpetually † disagreed, opposed, and contradicted one another in all their Disputations to such a degree, that St *Austin* some-

where out of *Varro* reckons up no less than 280 Opinions concerning that One Question, what was the *Chief Good* or *Final Happiness* of Man. The Effect of all which differences could not, without doubt, but be a mighty hindrance to that Conviction and general Influence, which that great Truth, in the *Certainty* whereof they All clearly agreed, (namely, that the Practice of *Virtue* was necessary and indispensable,) ought to have had upon the Minds and Lives of Men. This whole Matter, is excellently set forth by *Lactantius*: *The*

\* Totam igitur veritatem, & omne divinæ religionis arcanum Philosophi attingerunt. Sed aliis reluculentibus, defendere id, quod invenerant, nequeverunt; quia singulis ratio non quadravit; nec ea, quæ vera senserant, in summam redigere potuerunt. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

*Philosophers*, saith \* he, *take them All together, did indeed discover all the particular Doctrines of true Religion; But because each*



one *indeavoured* to confute what the others asserted; and no Ones single Scheme, was in all its parts consistent, and agreeable to reason and truth; and none of them were able to collect into One whole and Entire Scheme, the several Truths dispersed among them All; therefore they were not able to maintain and defend what they had discovered. And again; having set down a brief summary of the whole Doctrine and Design of true Religion, from the Original to the Consummation of all Things; This Entire Scheme, says

† he, because the Philosophers were ignorant of, therefore they were not able to comprehend the Truth; notwithstanding that they saw and discovered singly, almost all the Particulars of which the whole Scheme consists; But this was done by different Men, and at different Times, and in different Manners; with various mixtures of different

† Quam summam, quia Philosophi non comprehenderunt; nec veritatem comprehendere potuerunt; quamvis ea fere, quibus summa ipsa constat, & viderint & explicaverint: Sed diversi ac diverse illa omnia protulerunt, non annectentes nec causas rerum, nec consequentias, nec rationes; ut summam illam, quæ continet universa, & compingerent & completerent. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

quam, colligeret in unum, ac redigeret in corpus; is profecto non dissentiret a nobis. Sed hoc nemo facere, nisi veri peritus ac sciens, potest. Verum autem non nisi ejus scire est, qui sit doctus a Deo. *Id. ibid.*

Errours,

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Errours, in what every one discovered of Truth singly; *and without finding the Connexion of the Causes, and Consequences, and Reasons of Things; from the mutual Dependencies of which, the Completeness and Perfection of the whole Scheme arises. Whereas, had there been any Man, who could have collected and put together in Order all the several Truths, which were taught singly and scatteringly by Philosophers of all the different Sects, and have made up out of them One Entire consistent Scheme; truly he would not have differed much from Us Christians; But This, it was not possible for any Man to do, without having the True System of Things first Revealed to him.*

*And those things which they were able to prove and explain clearly and distinctly enough, yet they had not sufficient Authority to inforce in Practise.*

5. Lastly, Even Those Things, which the Philosophers were not only themselves certain of, but which they have also been able to *prove and explain to Others, with sufficient clearness and plainness; such as are the most obvious and necessary Duties of Life; they have not yet had Authority enough to inforce and inculcate upon Mens minds with so strong an impression, as to influence and govern the general practise of the World. The Truths which they prov-*  
ed

ed by Speculative Reason,  
\* wanted still some more  
sensible Authority to back  
them, and make them of  
more Force and Efficacy  
in Practise; And the †  
*Precepts* which they laid  
down, however evidently  
reasonable and fit to be  
obeyed, seemed still to  
want Weight, and to be  
but the *Precepts* of Men.  
Hence || none of the Phi-  
losophers, even of those  
who taught the clearest  
and certainest *Truths*, and  
offered the best and wisest  
*Instructions*, and inforced  
them with the strongest  
*Motives* that could be;  
were yet ever able to work  
any remarkable Change,  
in the Minds and Lives of  
any considerable Part of

\* *Platonis documenta*,  
quamvis ad rem multum  
conferant, tamen parum  
habent *Firmitatis* ad pro-  
bandam & implendam veri-  
tatem. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

† Quid ergo? nihilne illi  
[Philosophi] simile præcipi-  
unt? Imo permulta, & ad  
verum frequenter accedunt.  
Sed nihil ponderis habent  
illa præcepta, quia sunt hu-  
mana; & auctoritate majori,  
id est, divina illa, ca-  
rent. Nemo igitur credit;  
quia tam se hominem putat  
esse qui audit, quam est ille  
qui præcipit. *Lactant. lib. 3.*

|| 'Εἰπο'μι δ' ἂν ἀληθεύειν  
τὰς δυνάμεις διαδίδειν  
τὰς ἀκροατὰς ὅτι λεγόμε-  
νων ἔτι βίοντας, ὡς τῶν  
ἔτι ἔχοντων. Διαπύθει  
Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ χριστιανοὶ περὶ τῶν  
ἐκ τῶν ἀπὸ τῶν καλεσμένων μέ-  
λων αἰῶν --- δεικνύτω  
ἐν καὶ κόσμῳ ἢ ὁ ἐκλεγμένῳ,  
τίνες διετέθησαν περὶ αἰώνιων  
κολάσεων, ὑπὸ ὅτι τελετῶν  
καὶ μυστηρίων. *Origen. ad-  
vers. Cels. lib. 8.*

Παρεστὶν μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν  
εἰς τὴν φαίδων, καὶ ἐκ οἷου εἰ  
δύτην, καὶ εἰς Πολέμων,

μεταβαλόντες ἀπὸ ἀσώτου καὶ μοχθηροτάτου βίου, ἐφελούσης· ὡς δὲ  
ὁ παῖς Ἰησοῦ, ἔμνονον τίτε οἱ δάδκα, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ πολλαπλασιάζουσιν  
οἱ τίνες γινόμενοι σωφρόνων χρεός. *Idem lib. 1.*

Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, &c. Numquid hæc Philoso-  
phorum &c. *Lactant. lib. 3. See this passage cited above, pag.*



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Mankind ; as the preaching of Christ and his Apostles undeniably did. Neither does it appear in History, that

\* Σωκράτης μὲν γὰρ ἐδίδας ὅπως εὖ δεῖ, ὡς τὸ τέτυκτο τοῦ θού-  
μα | ① ἀποδείκναι. Χεῖρ ὡ-  
ς τὸ καὶ ἀπὸ Σωκράτους ἀπὸ  
μέρους γνωθῆναι ἐφίλοσοφοι  
καὶ ἐφίλολόγοι μόνον ἐπέειπ-  
ον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντελῶς ἰδιω-  
ται, καὶ δόξης καὶ φόβου καὶ θανά-  
του καταπορονήσαντες. Ju-  
stin. Apolog. 1.

\* any Number of Socra-  
tes's or Plato's Follow-  
ers, were convinced of  
the Excellency of true Vir-  
tue or the Certainty of its  
final Reward, in such a  
manner, as to be willing  
to lay down their Lives

for its sake ; as Innumerable of the Disciples of Christ, are known to have done. In *Speculation* indeed, it may perhaps seem possible, that, notwithstanding it must be confessed that Philosophy cannot discover any complete and satisfactory remedy for past miscarriages, yet the Precepts and Motives offered by the best Philosophers might at least be sufficient to amend and reform Mens Manners for the future. But in *Experience and Practice* it hath on the contrary appeared to be altogether impossible, for Philosophy and bare Reason to reform Mankind effectually, without the Assistance of some higher Principle. For, though the bare natural possibility of the thing, cannot indeed easily be denied ; yet

in this Case, (as Cicero excellently ex-  
presses † it,) in like

manner as in Physick it  
matters nothing, whether a  
Disease be such as that no  
Man does, or no Man can  
recover from it ; so neither  
does it make any difference,  
whether by Philosophy no  
Man is, or no Man can be  
made wise and good ; So

that, without some greater Help and  
Assistance, Mankind is plainly left in a  
very bad State. Indeed in the original  
uncorrupted State of Humane Nature,  
before the Mind of Man was depraved  
with prejudiced Opinions, corrupt Af-  
fections, and vitious Inclinations, Cu-  
stoms and Habits ; right Reason may  
justly be supposed to have been a suffi-  
cient Guide, and a Principle powerful  
enough to preserve Men in the constant  
Practise of their Duty : But in the pre-  
sent Circumstances and Condition of  
Mankind, the wisest and most sensible  
of the Philosophers themselves have not  
been backward to complain, that they  
found the *Understandings* of Men so  
dark and cloudy, their *Wills* so biassed and  
inclined to evil, their *Passions* so outra-  
gious

† Nam si, consensu om-  
nium Philosophorum, sapi-  
entiam nemo assequitur ; in  
summīs malis omnes sumus,  
quibus vos optime consul-  
tum a Diis immortalibus  
dicitis. Nam ut nihil inte-  
rest utrum nemo valeat, an  
nemo possit valere ; sic non  
intelligo quid intersit, utrum  
nemo sit sapiens, an nemo  
esse possit. Cic. de Natura  
Deor. lib. 3.

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*gious and rebelling against Reason* ; that they lookt upon the Rules and Laws of right Reason, as very hardly practicable, and which they had very little Hopes of ever being able to perswade the World to submit to : In a Word, they confessed that Humane Nature was *strangely corrupted* ; and acknowledged this *Corruption* to be a Disease whereof they knew not the true *Cause*, and could not find out a sufficient Remedy. So that the great Duties of Religion, were laid down by them as Matters of *speculation and dispute*, rather than as the *Rules of Action* ; and not so much *urged upon the Hearts and Lives of Men*, as *proposed to the Admiration* of those, who thought them scarce possible to be effectually practised by the generality of Men. To remedy all these Disorders, and conquer all these Corruptions ; there was plainly wanting some extraordinary and supernatural *Assistance* ; which was above the reach of bare Reason and Philosophy to procure, and yet without which the Philosophers themselves were sensible there \* could never be any truly Great and Good Men.

\* Nemo unquam vir magnus, sine Divino Aflatu fuit. Cicero.



VII. *For these Reasons there was plainly wanting a Divine Revelation, to recover Mankind out of their universally degenerate estate, into a state suitable to the original excellency of their Nature : Which Divine Revelation, both the necessities of Men and their Natural Notions of God, gave them reasonable ground to expect and hope for ; As appears from the acknowledgments which the best and wisest of the Heathen Philosophers themselves have made, of their Sense of the necessity and want of such a Revelation ; and the expressions they have given, of their Hopes that God would some time or other vouchsafe it unto them.*

i. There was plainly wanting a *Divine Revelation*, to recover Mankind out of their universal corruption and degeneracy ; And without such a Revelation, it was not possible that the World should ever be effectually reformed. For *If* (as has been before particularly shown) the gross and stupid Ignorance, the innumerable Prejudices and vain Opinions, the strong Passions and Appetites of Sense, and the many vicious Customs and Habits, which the generality of Mankind continually labour under ; make it undeniably too difficult a

R

Work

Work, for Men of all Capacities to discover every Man for himself, by the bare Light of Nature, all the particular Branches of their Duty; but most Men, in the present State of Things, have manifestly need of much Teaching, and particular Instruction: *If* those who were best able to discover the Truth and instruct others therein, namely the Wisest and Best of the Philosophers, were Themselves unavoidably altogether ignorant of some Doctrines, and very doubtful and uncertain of others, absolutely necessary to the bringing about that great End, of the Reformation of Mankind: *If* those Truths, which they were themselves very certain of, they were not yet able to prove and explain clearly enough, to vulgar Understandings: *If* even those things, which they proved sufficiently, and explained with all clearness, they had not yet Authority enough to inforce and inculcate upon Mens Minds with so strong an Impression, as to influence and govern the general Practise of the World; neither pretended to afford Men any supernatural Assistance, which yet was very necessary to so great a Work: And *If*, after  
all

all, in the discovery of such Matters as are the great Motives of Religion, Men are apt to be more easily wrought upon, and more strongly affected, by good Testimony, than by the strictest abstract Arguments ; So that, upon the whole, 'tis plain the Philosophers were never by any means well qualified to reform Mankind with any considerable Success : Then there was evidently wanting some *particular Revelation*, which might supply all these Defects: There was plainly a Necessity of some *particular Reve-*

*lation* to discover \* in what Manner, and with what Kind of external Service, God might acceptably be worshipped ; There was a Necessity of some *particular Revelation*, to discover what Expiation God would accept for Sin, by which the Authority, Honour, and Dignity of his Laws might be effectually vindicated ; There was a Necessity of some

*particular Revelation*, to † give Men full assurance of the Truth of those great Motives of Religion,

\* Νομοθέτης, ὅστις νῦν κέκτηται, ἔπολε μὴ πολυμήσῃ κρινοτομῶν, ὅπῃ θεοσέβειαν, ἥτις μὴ σιφὴς ἔχει πρὸς τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν. --- μὴ δὲν το- παρῶπαν εἰδὼς, ὥστερ' εἰδ' ὃν δυνάτο' εἰδέναι τῇ θνητῇ φύσει ἢ τοῖς τῶν πέρι. Plato in Epinomide.

Τὰ γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα [θεῶν διατριβῆς] ἔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς οἰκίζοντες τε πόλιν εἰδέναι ἄλλω πεποιήμεθα, εἰάν νῦν ἔχομεν, εἰδὲ χρησόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ, ἢ μὴ ἢ τῷ πατέρῳ Θεῷ. Plato de Republ. 4.

† Τὸ μὲν ἀληθές, ὃ ξένος διηγεῖσθαι ταῦτα ἔπος ἔ- χεν, πολλῶν ἀμφισβητῶν- των, Θεὸς ὅστις. Plato de Lé- gib. lib. 1.



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*the Rewards and Punishments of a future State, which, notwithstanding the strongest Arguments of Reason, Men could not yet forbear doubting of: In fine, There was a Necessity of some par-*

|| Τέτο δὴ ἔν τὸ μέγ-  
θαμεν φύσει κυριώτατον καὶ  
δυνατὸν ὡς οἶόν τε μάλιστα  
καὶ ἀεὶ μαθεῖν, εἰ διδάσχοι  
πρὸς ἄλλ' ἐδ' ἂν διδάξειεν,  
εἰ μὴ Θεὸς ὑπερῴτο. Plato  
in *Epinomide*.

*ticular Divine Revelation,*  
to || make the whole Do-  
ctrine of Religion *clear*  
*and obvious* to all Capaci-  
ties, to add *Weight and Au-*  
*thority* to the plainest Pre-  
cepts, and to furnish Men

with extraordinary *Assistances* to enable  
them to overcome the Corruptions of  
their Nature: And *without* the assistance  
of such a Revelation, 'tis manifest it  
was not possible that the World could  
ever be effectually reformed; Ye may

\* Εἴτε † λοιπὸν χρόνον  
καταδιδόντες διατελοῖτε ἂν,  
εἰ μὴ πᾶσα ἄλλον ὑμῶν ὁ Θε-  
ὸς ἐπιπέμψῃς, καὶ δόμῃ-  
ν ὑμῶν. Plato in *Apolog. So-*  
*cratis*.

† Εὖ γὰρ χρὴ εἰδέναι, ὅ,  
πῶς ἂν σωθῇ τε καὶ ῥύη-  
θῃ δαί, ἐν πᾶσιν κατὰ  
τάσιν πολιτηῶν, Θεὸς μόνος  
αὐτὸ σῶσαι. Plato de *Re-*  
*publ. lib. 6.*

*e'en give over, saith \* So-*  
*crates, all Hopes of amend-*  
*ing Mens manners for the*  
*future, unless God be plea-*  
*sed to send you some other*  
*Instructor: And Plato,*  
*Whatever, saith † he, is*  
*set right and as it should be,*  
*in the present Evil state of*  
*the World; can be so only by*

*the particular Interposition of God.*

2. Since

2. Since therefore there was plainly and confessedly wanting a *Divine Revelation*, to relieve the Necessities of Men in their Natural State; And no Man can pretend to say, that it is inconsistent with any of the Attributes of God, or unbecoming the Wisdom of the Creator of all things, to supply that Want; to reveal to his Creatures more fully the way to Happiness, to make more particular discoveries of his Will to them, to set before them in a clearer light the rewards and punishments of a future State, to explain in what manner he will be pleased to be worshipped, and to declare what satisfaction he will accept for Sin, and upon what conditions he will receive returning Sinners; Nay, since on the contrary, it seems more suitable to our natural Notions of the Goodness and Mercy of God, to suppose that he should do all this, than not: It follows undeniably, that it was most reasonable, and agreeable to the dictates of Nature, to expect or hope for such a divine Revelation. The generality of the Heathen World, who were far more equal and less prejudiced Judges in this matter, than our modern Deists; were so fully perswaded, that

*That it was agreeable to the dictates of Nature and right Reason, to expect or hope for such a divine Revelation.*

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the great rules for the conduct of humane Life must receive their Authority from Heaven ; that their chief Law-givers thought it not a sufficient recommendation of their Laws, that they were agreeable to the Light of Nature ; unless they pretended also, that they received them from God. But I have no need in this Argument, to make use of the Examples of Idolatrous Law-givers : The Philosophers themselves, the Best and Wisest and the least Superstitious of them, that ever-lived ; were not ashamed to confess openly, their Sense of the Want of a Divine Revelation ; and to declare their Judgment, that it was most natural and truly agreeable to right and sound reason, to *Hope* for something of that nature. There is, besides the several places before-cited, a most excellent passage in *Plato* to this purpose ; one of the most remarkable passages indeed in his whole Works, though not quoted by any that I have met with ; which therefore I think highly worthy to be transcribed at large, as a just and unanswerable reproach to all those who deny that there is any Want or Need of a Revelation. *It seems best to me, faith*

\* See



\* Socrates to one of his Disciples, *that we expect quietly; nay it is absolutely necessary, that we wait with patience, till such time as we can Learn certainly, how we ought to behave our selves both towards God and towards Men. When will that time come,* replies the Disciple, *and who is it that will teach us this? For methinks I earnestly desire to see and know who the Person is that will do it. It is one,* answers Socrates, *who has Now a Concern for you. But in like manner, as Homer relates that Minerva took away the Mist from before Diomedes's Eyes, that he might be able to distinguish one Person from another; so it is necessary that the Mist which is now before your Mind, be*

κράτιστον ἐγὼ μοι δοκῇ. ΣΩΚ: Καὶ οὐδ' ὅπως σοὶ δοκῇ ἀσφαλές εἶναι γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ ὁρᾶν κινδυνὸν τοσούτον κινδυνόν. — ΑΛΚ: Τοῖς θεοῖς ᾧ καὶ θεοῖς καὶ πᾶσι πάντα τὰ νομιζόμενα τότε δόσσομεν, ὅταν ἐκείνῳ τὸ ἡμέραν ἐλθῇ ἰδῶν ἢ ζῇ δ' ἐπὶ μακρῷ, τέτων θελόντων. Plato in Alcibiade 2. If it be supposed that Socrates in this passage means Himself, (which is very difficult;) yet it nevertheless very lively represents the great Sense which the most considerate Heathens had, of their Want of some Extraordinary Instruction.

\* ΣΩΚ: Ἐμοὶ μὲν ἔνδοξαι κέρτιστον ἐγὼ, ἢ συχρᾶν ἔχειν..... ἀναγκάσιον ἔνδοξαι ὡς δὲ πρὸς Θεὸν καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακρίσθαι. ΑΛΚ: Πότε ἔνδοξαι ὁ χρόνος τοῦτο, ὃ Σώκρας περὶ; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδάριον; ἢ τίς γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῇ ἰδεῖν τῶτον τὸ ἀνθρώπου τίς ἐστίν. ΣΩΚ: Οὐτός ἐστιν ὃ μέλει περὶ σέ. Ἀλλὰ δοκῇ μοι, ὡς περὶ τῶν Διομήδωνος τὸν Ἀδριανὸν Ὀμηροῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀφθαλμῶν ἀφελῆναι τὸ ἀχλὺν, ὅπως εὖ γινώσκωμεν ἡμῶν Θεὸν ἢ δὲ καὶ ἀνδρά. ἔγω καὶ σὺ δὲ ἔνδοξαι τὸν ἄλλο, ἢ νῦν περὶ τῶν τυγχάνει, τοπικῶν καὶ ἢ δὲ περὶ πρὸς ἐμὴν μέλλεις γινώσκειν καὶ κακὸν ἢ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν νῦν καὶ γὰρ ἐκ ἂν μοι δοκῇς δύνησθαι. ΑΛΚ: Ἀφαιρέτω, εἴτε βέλτε, τὸ ἀχλὺν, εἴτε ἄλλο τι ὡς ἐγὼ παρεσχεύασμαι μηδὲν ἂν φεύγειν τὸν ὑπὲρ ἐκείνου περὶ τῶν ὅσων ποτ' ἐστὶν ὁ ἀνθρώπου, εἴτε μέλλοιμι βελπώνην ἔχειν. ΣΩΚ: Ἀλλὰ μὴ κακῶς δαυμάσθαι ὅσον περὶ σέ περὶ τῶν ἔχει. ΑΛΚ: Εἰς τότε τοίνυν καὶ τὴν δύσιν ἀναβάλλεσθαι

first taken away, that afterwards you may learn to distinguish rightly betwixt Good and Evil ; for, as yet, you are not able to do it. Let the Person you mentioned, replies the Disciple, take away this Mist, or whatever else it be, as soon as he pleases : For I am willing to do any thing he shall direct, whosoever this Person be ; so that I may but become a good Man. Nay, answers Socrates, That Person has a wonderful readiness and willingness to do all this for you. It will be best then, replies the Disciple, to forbear offering any more Sacrifices, till the time that this Person appears. You judge very well, answers Socrates ; it will be much safer so to do, than to run so great a hazard of offering Sacrifices which you know not whether they are acceptable to God or no. Well then, replies the Disciple, we will Then make our Offerings to the Gods, when That Day comes ; And I hope, God willing, it may not be far off. And in another place, the same Author, having given a large account of that most excellent Discourse, which Socrates made a little before his Death, concerning the great Doctrines of Religion, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Certainty of a Life to come ; introduces

one

one of his Disciples replying in the following manner: *I am*, faith

\* he, of the same Opinion with you, O Socrates, concerning these things; that, to discover the certain Truth of them, in this present Life, is either absolutely impossible for us, or at least exceeding difficult; Yet, not to enquire with our utmost diligence into what can be said about them, or to give over our inquiry before we have carried our search as far as possible, is the sign of a mean and low Spirit: On the contrary, we ought therefore by all means to do one of these two things; either, by hearkening to instruction, and by our own diligent Study, to find out the Truth; or, if that be absolutely impossible, then to fix our foot upon what to humane Reason, after the utmost search, appears best and most probable; and, trusting to That, venture upon that bottom to direct the course of our Lives accordingly: Unless

\* Ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ, ὅτι Σώκρατες, πρὸς τοιούτων ἰσως ὥστε καὶ σοὶ τὸ μὲν σαφές εἶναι ἐν ταῖς νυνὶ βίῳ ἢ ἀδιώσιον εἶναι, ἢ παγχαλεπόν τι το μὲν τοι αὐτὰ [leg: τὰ] λεγόμενα πρὸς αὐτὸν μὴ εἶναι παντὶ τρόπῳ ἐλέγχειν, καὶ περὶ αὐτῶν πρὶν ἀν' παντὰ καὶ σκοπῶν ἀπίπῃ τις, πῶς μαλ' ἀκρίβ' εἶναι ἀνδρός. [Note that Ficinus in his translation of this passage, as if the Word εἶναι was to be repeated πρὸς τὴ κοινῇ with προσαφίσταται, writes absurdly non desistere instead of desistere.] Δεῖν γὰρ πρὸς αὐτὰ εἶναι γὰρ τι τέτων διατρέξασθαι ἢ μάθῃν ὅτι εἴη, ἢ εὐρεῖν ἢ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδιώσιον, ἢ γὰρ βέλτιστον ἢ Ἀνθρώπων λόγων λαβόντα καὶ δυσελέγκτοτατον, ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ ὀχέμενον, ὥστε ὅτι χάρις, κινδυνεύοντα διαπεύσαι ἢ βίον· εἰ μὴ τις δύνασις ἀσφαλέστερον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον, ὅτι βεβαιότερον ὀχύμαλ' ἢ λόγῳ θεῶν τινός, διαπορεύσθαι. Plato in Phaedone.



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*a Man could have still some more sure and certain conduct to carry him through this Life; such as a Divine Discovery of the Truth, would be. I shall mention but one Instance more, and that is of Porphyry; who, though he lived after our Saviours time, and had a most inveterate hatred to the Christian Revelation*

*in particular, yet † confesses in general, that he was sensible there was wanting some universal Method of delivering Mens Souls, which no Sect of Philosophy had yet found out.*

† Quum autem dicit Porphyrius, in primo de Regressu Animæ libro, nondum receptum in unam quandam sectam quæ universalem viam animæ contineat liberandæ, nondumq; in suam notitiam eandem viam historiali cognitione perlatam; procul dubio confiteretur, esse aliquam; sed nondum

in suam venisse notitiam. Ita ei non sufficiebat quicquid de anima liberanda studiosissime didicerat, sibi, vel potius aliis, nosse ac tenere videbatur. Sentiebat enim adhuc sibi deesse aliquam præstantissimam auctoritatem, quam de re tanta sequi oporteret. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, lib. 10, c. 32.

*The unreasonableness of Modern Deists, in denying the Want and Use of a Revelation.*

3. This sense of the Antient and Wisest Philosophers, is much departed from by our *Modern Deists*; who contend that there was no Want, no Need of a Revelation; that Philosophy and right Reason was of it self sufficiently able, to instruct and preserve Men in the practise of their Duty; and that nothing was to be expected from Revelation

lation. But besides what has been already hinted concerning the extreme Barbarity of the present Heathen World, and what the Philosophers both Greeks and Latins have confessed concerning the state of the more civilized Nations wherein They lived ; I think we may safely appeal even to our Adversaries themselves, Whether the Testimony of *Christ*, (without considering at present what Truth and Evidence it has,) concerning the Immortality of the Soul, and the Rewards and Punishments of a Future State, have not had (notwithstanding all the Corruptions of Christians,) visibly in Experience and

Effect, a \* greater and more powerful influence upon the Lives and Actions of Men, than the reasonings of all the Philosophers that ever were in the World ; Whether cre-

dible Testimony, and the Belief and Authority of Revelation, be not in it self as it were a Light held to the Consciences of stupid and careless Men ; and the most natural and proper means that can be imagined, to awaken and rowze up many of those, who  
would

\* Οὐκ ὀλίγες, Ἕλληνας καὶ  
Βαρβάρους, σώφεις καὶ ἀνοήτους,  
μέχρι θανάτου αγωνίζεσθαι  
ὑπὲρ Χριστιανισμοῦ, ἢ ὑπὲρ  
μὴ ἑξομώσων. ὅπως εἶδεις  
ὑπὲρ ἄλλου δόγματος ἰσορρο-  
ποιεῖν. *Origen. advers. Cels.*  
*lib. 1.*

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would be little affected with all the strict Arguments and abstract Reasonings in the World ; And, to bring this matter to a short Issue ; whether in Christian Countries, (at least where Christianity is professed in any tolerable degree of Purity,) the generality even

† Ὡς μὲν καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν βραχὺς τινὰς καὶ ἀειδιμῶς ληπτοὺς, ὁρῶντας πρὸ Θεοῦ φέρειν δόξας ἀλλὰ, μυρία πλὴν βαρβάρων. Euseb. Demonstrat. Evangel. lib. 3. c. 3.

Αἱ δὲ τῆ Θεοῦ Χρυσῶ μαθητὰ διδύται ἐκκλησίαι, σωεξεταζόμεναι ταῖς ὡν παροικῶσι δῆμων ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς φασὶν εἶσιν ἐν κόσμῳ. Τίς γὰρ ἐκείνους ὁμολογήσαι, καὶ τοὺς χεῖρας τῶν ἀπὸ τῆ ἐκκλησίας, καὶ συγχεῖται τῶν βελτιόνων ἐλάττω, πολλὰ κρείττω συζῆναι τῶν ἐν τοῖς δῆμοις ἐκκλησιῶν. [Note, this Passage is both corruptly printed, πολλῶν instead of πολλῶ ; and also the Sense of it hurt by an imperfect Translation. Origen. adver. Cels. lib. 3. Edit. Cantab. pag. 128.]

† of the meaner and most vulgar and ignorant People have not Truer and Worthier Notions of God, more just and right Apprehensions concerning his Attributes and Perfections, a deeper Sense of the Difference of Good and Evil, a greater regard to moral Obligations and to the plain and most necessary Duties of Life, and a more firm and universal Expectation of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments ; than in any Hea-

then Country, any considerable Number of Men were ever found to have had.

*The great Necessity and Use of Divine Revelation.*

It may here perhaps be pretended by modern Deists, that the great Ignorance, and undeniable corruptness of the whole Heathen World ; has always been owing



ing, not to any absolute Insufficiency of the Light of Nature it self, but merely to the fault of the several particular Persons, in not sufficiently improving that Light; and that Deists *Now*, in places where Learning and right Reason are cultivated, are well able to discover and explain all the Obligations and Motives of Morality, without believing any thing of Revelation. But This, even though it were true, (as, in the Sense they intend, it by no means is; because, as has been \* before shown, there are several very necessary Truths not possible to be discovered with *any certainty* by the bare Light of Nature; But) supposing it, I say, to be true, that all the Obligations and Motives of Morality *Could possibly* be discovered and explained clearly, by the mere Light of Nature alone; yet even This would not at all prove, that there is no Need of Revelation. For whatever the bare *Natural Possibility* was; 'tis certain *in fact*, the Wisest *Philosophers of old*, † never were able to do it to any effectual purpose; but always willingly acknowledged that they still wanted some higher Assistance. And as to the great Pretences of the *Modern*

\* pag. 220, &c.

† See an excellent passage of Cicero to this purpose cited above, pag. 235.

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*Modern Deists* ; 'tis to be observed, that the clearness of Moral Reasonings was much improved, and the regard to a future State very much increased, even in Heathen Writers, after the coming of *Christ* : And almost all the Things that are said wisely and truly by modern Deists, are plainly borrowed from that Revelation, which they refuse to imbrace ; and without which, they could never have been able to have said the same things. *Now* indeed, when our whole Duty, with its true Motives, is clearly revealed to us ; its precepts appear plainly agreeable to Reason ; and Conscience readily approves what is good, as it condemns what is evil ; Nay, after our Duty is thus made known to us, 'tis easy not only to see its agreement *with* Reason, but also to begin and deduce its Obligation *from* Reason : But had we been utterly destitute of all revealed Light ; then to have discovered our duty in all points, with the true motives of it, merely by the help of natural reason, would have been a work of nicety, pains and labour ; like groping for an unknown way in the obscure Twilight. What ground have any of our Modern

Deists

Deists to imagine, that if they themselves had lived without the Light of the Gospel, they should have been wiser than *Socrates* and *Plato* and *Cicero*? How are they certain, they should have made such a right use of their Reason, as to have discovered the Truth *exactly*, without being any way led aside by Prejudice or Neglect? If their Lot had been among the *Vulgar*, how are they sure they should have been so happy, or so considerate, as not to have been involved in that Idolatry and Superstition, which overspread the whole World? If they had joyned themselves to the *Philosophers*, which Sect would they have chosen to have followed? and what Book would they have resolved upon, to be the adæquate Rule of their Lives and Conversations? Or if they would have set up for *Themselves*, how are they certain they should have been skilful and unprejudiced enough, to have deduced the several Branches of their Duty, and applied them to the several Cases of Life, by Argumentation and dint of Reason? 'Tis *one thing* to see that those Rules of life, which are beforehand plainly and particularly laid before us, are perfectly



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fectly agreeable to Reason ; and *another thing* to find out those Rules merely by the Light of Reason, without their having first been any otherwise made known. We see that even many of those, who profess to govern their Lives by the *plain written Rule* of an *instituted and revealed Religion*, are yet most miserably *ignorant* of their Duty ; and how can any Man be sure he should have made so good Improvement of his Reason, as to have *understood* it *perfectly* in all its parts, without any such help ? We see that many of those, who profess to believe firmly that *great and everlasting Happiness*, which Christ has promised to Obedience ; and that *great and eternal Misery*, which Christ has threatned to Disobedience ; are yet hurried away by their Lusts and Passions to transgress the Conditions of that Covenant, to which these Promises and these Threatnings are annexed : And how can any Man be sure he should be able to overcome those great Temptations, if these mighty Motives were less *distinctly known*, or less *powerfully enforced* ? But suppose he could, and that by strength of Reason he could demonstrate to himself these things

things with all *clearness and distinctness*; yet could All Men do so? Affuredly all Men are not *equally capable* of being *Philosophers*, though all Men are *equally obliged* to be *Religious*. At least thus much is certain, that the Rewards and Punishments of another World, the great Motives of Religion, cannot be so *powerfully enforced*, to the influencing the Lives and Practise of all sorts of Men, by one who shall undertake to demonstrate the reality of them by abstract Reason and Arguments; as by one who showing sufficient Credentials of his having been himself there, shall assure them of the truth and certainty of these things. But after all, the Question does not really lie here. The Truth, at the bottom, is plainly This: All the great Things that Modern Deists affect to say of *right Reason*, as to its sufficiency in discovering the Obligations and Motives of *Morality*; is only a Pretense, to be made use of when they are opposing *Christianity*. At other times, and in reality, they have no hearty regard for *Morality*, nor for the natural Evidences of the Certainty of a Future State: They are willing enough to believe, that Men perish absolutely

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at Death ; and so they have no Concern to support effectually the cause of Virtue, nor care to make out any consistent Scheme of Things ; but unavoidably recur, in Truth, to *downright Atheism*. At least, in the Manners of most of them, 'tis too plain and apparent, that Absolute Libertinism is the thing they really aim at ; and however their Creed may pretend to be the Creed of Deists, yet almost always their Practice is the Practice of very Atheists.

*Yet God was not absolutely Obliged, to afford Men the Help of such a Revelation.*

4. To return therefore to the Argument. From what has been said upon this Head, it appears plainly, that 'tis agreeable to the Natural Hopes and Expectations of Men, that is, of Right Reason duly improved ; to suppose God making some particular Revelation of his Will to mankind, which may supply the undeniable Defects of the Light of Nature. And at the same time, 'tis evident that such a thing is by no means unworthy of the Divine Wisdom, or inconsistent with any of the Attributes of God ; but rather, on the contrary, most suitable to them. Consequently, considering the manifold Wants and Necessities of Men, and the abundant Goodness and Mercy of God ;  
there



there is great ground, from right Reason and the Light of Nature, to believe, that God would not always leave Men wholly destitute of so needful an Assistance, but would at some time or other actually afford it them. Yet it does not from hence at all follow, (as some have imagined,) that God is *Obliged* to make such a Revelation: For then it must needs have been given in all Ages, and to all Nations; and might have been claimed and demanded as of Justice, rather than wished for and desired as of Mercy and condescending Goodness. But the fore-mentioned considerations are such as might afford Men reasonable ground to *Hope* for some Favour of this kind, to be conferred at such Time, and in such Manner, and upon such Persons, as should seem best to supreme infinite Wisdom: At least, they might well dispose and prepare Men beforehand, whenever any doctrine should come accompanied with just and good evidence of its being such a Revelation, to believe and embrace it with all readiness.

It has been made use of, by † a modern Author, as his principal and strongest Argument against the reasonableness of believing any Revelation

*Want of  
Universality,  
no  
sufficient  
Objection  
against the  
Truth of a  
Revelation.  
† Oracles  
of Reason;  
pag. 197,  
&c.*

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at all ; that it is confessed there has been no Revelation *universally* owned and embraced as such, either in all Ages, or by all Nations in any Age. He pretends to acknowledge, that if the Doctrine of Christianity was *universally* entertained, he would not doubt of its being truly a Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind : But since, in fact, there is no instituted Religion *universally* received as a Divine Revelation ; and there are several Nations to whom the Christian Doctrine in particular, was never so much as preached, nor ever came to their knowledge at all ; he concludes that, what is not universal and equally made known to *All Men*, cannot be needful for *Any* ; and consequently that there never was any real Want of a Revelation at all, nor any ground to think any further assistance necessary to enable Men to answer all the Ends of their Creation, than the bare Light of Nature. This is the Summ and Strength of this Authors reasoning ; and herein all the Deniers of Revelation agree with him. Now, not to take notice here, that it is by no means impossible, but that all Men may be capable of receiving some Benefit  
from

from a Revelation, which yet a great part of them may never have heard of; If these Mens reasoning was true, it would follow by the same Argument, that neither was *Natural Religion* necessary to enable Men to answer the ends of their Creation. For, though all the Truths of Natural Religion, are indeed certainly discoverable by the due use of right Reason alone; yet 'tis evident *All Men* are not indued with the same Faculties and Capacities, nor have they All equally afforded to them the same means of making that discovery; As these Gentlemen themselves upon some occasions are willing enough to own, when they are describing the barbarous Ignorance of some poor Indian Nations: And consequently the knowledge of Natural Religion being, in fact, by no means universal; it will follow that there is no great Necessity even of That; but that Men may do very well without it, in performing the functions of the Animal Life, and directing themselves wholly by the Inclinations of Sense; And thus these Gentlemen must at last be forced to let go all moral Obligations, and so recur unavoidably to absolute Atheism. The Truth is:



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As God was not obliged, to make all his Creatures equal ; to make Men, Angels ; or to endue all Men, with the same Faculties and Capacities as Any ; So neither is he bound to make all Men capable of the *same Degree* or the *same Kind* of Happiness, or to afford all Men the very same *means and opportunities* of obtaining it. There is ground enough, from the consideration of the manifest corruption of Humane Nature, to be so far sensible of the Want of a divine Revelation, as that right Reason and the Light of Nature it self will lead a wise and considerate Man to think it very probable, that the infinitely merciful and good God may actually vouchsafe to afford Men some such supernatural Assistance : And consequently such a person will be very willing, ready, and prepared to entertain a Doctrine which shall at any time come attended with just and good Evidence of its being truly a Revelation of the Will of God. But it does not at all from hence follow, either that God is absolutely bound to make such a Revelation ; or that, if he makes it, it must equally be made to All Men ; or that, since in Fact it is not made to All, there-

therefore there is no reason to believe that there is any Need or any Probability of its being made to Any.

VIII. *There is no other Religion now in the World, but the Christian, that has any just pretense or tolerable appearance of Reason, to be esteemed such a divine Revelation : And therefore, if Christianity be not true, there neither is nor ever was any Revelation of the Will of God at all made to Mankind.*

This Proposition will easily be granted by all *Modern Unbelievers*; and therefore I need not be particular in the Proof of it.

The *Mahometan* Religion, was founded by a vitious person, proposes ridiculous and trifling Doctrines to be believed, was propagated merely by violence and force of Arms, was confirmed by no publick and uncontestable Miracles, promises vain and sensual Rewards to its Professours, and is every way incompass'd with numberless such Absurdities and Inconsistencies, (as those who have given us Accounts of the Life of *Mahomet*, and the Nature of his Religion, have abundantly made out ; and is sufficiently evident even from the *Alcoran* it self ;) that there is no great Dan-

*of the  
Mahome-  
tan Reli-  
gion.*

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ger of *Its* imposing upon rational and considerate Men.

*Of the  
Jewish  
Religion.*

The *Jewish* Religion, was founded wholly upon the Expectation of a Messiah to come; and the Time of his appearance was limited by such plain and determinate Prophecies, that what difficulties soever there may be in computing the very nice and exact Time of their Completion; or what different periods soever may be fixed, from whence to begin several Computations; yet the Time of their being fulfilled, is now, in all possible ways of computing, so very far elapsed, that, if the *Christian* Doctrine be false, there is no Supposition left, upon which the *Jewish* Religion can, with any Colour of Reason, be believed to be true.

It being evident therefore, that either the *Christian* Revelation is true, or else (how great Want soever there may have been of it) there never was any such thing as Revelation at all; It remains that we proceed to consider what *positive and direct* Evidence there is, to prove the Actual Truth of this Divine Revelation.

IX. *The*



IX. *The Christian Religion, considered in its primitive simplicity, and as taught in the Holy Scriptures, has all the Marks and Proofs of its being actually and truly a Divine Revelation; that any Divine Revelation, supposing it was true, could reasonably be imagined or desired to have.*

The necessary Marks and Proofs of a Religion coming from God, are these. The marks of a Religion coming from God.  
*First*, that the *Duties* it enjoyns, be all such as are agreeable to our natural Notions of God; and perfective of the Nature, and conducive to the Happiness and Well-being of Men; And that the *Doctrines* it teaches, be all such, as, though not indeed discoverable by the bare Light of Nature, yet, when discovered by Revelation, may be consistent with, and agreeable to, sound and unprejudiced Reason. For otherwise, no Evidence whatsoever, can be of so great force to prove that any Doctrine is True; as its being either Contradictory in it self, or Wicked in its Tendency, is, to prove that it must necessarily be False. *Secondly*, For the same reason, the *Motives* likewise, by which it is recommended to Mens Belief and Practice; and all the peculiar Circumstances,

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*stances*, with which it is attended; must be such as are suitable to the excellent Wisdom of God, and fitted to amend the Manners and perfect the Minds of Men. *Lastly*, It must moreover be *positively and directly proved* to come from God, by such certain *Signs and Matters of Fact*, as may be undeniable evidences of its Author's having actually a Divine Commission: For otherwise, as no Evidence can prove a Doctrine to come from God, if it be either Impossible or Wicked in it self; so on the other hand, neither can any degree of goodness or excellency in the Doctrine it self, make it certain, but only highly probable, to have come from God, unless it has moreover some positive and direct Evidence of its being actually Revealed.

The entire Proof therefore of this Proposition, must be made by an Induction of particulars, as follows.

X. *First, The Practical Duties which the Christian Religion enjoins, are all such, as are most agreeable to our natural Notions of God, and most perfective of the Nature and conducive to the Happiness and Well-being of Men: That is, Christianity*

*stianity even in this single respect, as containing alone and in one consistent System all the wise and good Precepts, (and those improved, augmented, and exalted to the highest degree of perfection,) that ever were taught singly and scatteredly, and many times but very corruptly, by the several Schools of the Philosophers; and this without any mixture of the fond, absurd, and superstitious Practises of any of those Philosophers; ought to be embraced and practised by all rational and considering Deists, who will act consistently, and steadily pursue the consequences of their own Principles; as at least the best Scheme and Sect of Philosophy, that ever was set up in the World; and highly probable, even though it had no external evidence, to be of divine Original.*

This Proposition is so very evident, The Proposition proved, in the several Instances of Duty. that the greatest Adversaries of the Christian Institution have never been able to deny it any otherwise, than by confounding the Inventions of Men, the Superstitious Practices of particular Persons, or the corrupt Additions of certain particular Churches or Societies of Christians, with the pure and simple Precepts of the Gospel of Christ. In all those Instances of Duty, which pure and un-



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uncorrupt Christianity enjoins, the Proposition is manifest and altogether undeniable. The Duties of *Love, Fear,* and *Adoration*, which the Christian Religion obliges us to render unto *God*, are so plainly incumbent upon us from the consideration of the excellent Attributes of the Divine Nature, and our relation to him as our Creatour and Preserver; that no Man who considers, can break loose from the Obligations which our Religion lays upon him to practise these Duties; without denying the very Being of God, and acting contrary to the reason and all the natural Notions of his own Mind. Its placing the true and acceptable Worship of God, not so much in any positive and ritual Observances, as in approaching him with pure Hearts and undefiled Bodies, with unfeigned Repentance for all past Mis-carriages, and sincere resolutions of constant Obedience for the future, to pray unto him for whatever we want, and return him our most hearty Thanks for whatever good things we receive; with such Dependence and Humility, such Submission, Trust and Reliance, as are the proper Affections of dutiful Children; all this is plainly most agree-  
able

able to our Natural Notions and Apprehensions of God. And that the Prayers of sinful and depraved Creatures, sincerely repenting, should be offered up to God, and become prevalent with him, through and by the Intercession of a *Mediator*; is very consonant to right and unprejudiced reason; as I shall have occasion to show more particularly hereafter, when I come to consider the Articles of our *Belief*. Again; The Duties of *Justice*, *Righteousness*, *Charity* and *Truth*, which the Christian Religion obliges us to exercise towards Men, are so apparently reasonable in themselves, and so directly conducive to the Happiness of Mankind; that their unalterable obligation is not only in great measure deducible, from the bare Light of Nature and right reason; but even those Men also, who have broken through all the Bonds of natural Religion it self, and the original Obligations of Virtue, have yet thought it necessary for the preservation of Society and the well-being of Mankind, that the Observation of these Duties to some degree, should be enforced by the Penalties of humane Laws. And the additional Improvements, which our Saviour has made to  
these

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*Mat. 5,  
16, &c.*

these Duties, by commanding his Disciples to be as it were Lights in the World, and Examples of good Works to all Men ; to be so far from Injuring others, that on the contrary they should not indulge themselves in any degree of Anger or Passion ; to seek reconciliation immediately upon any Difference or Offense that may arise ; to bear injuries patiently, rather than return evil for evil ; to be always willing to forgive one another their trespasses, as they all expect forgiveness at the Hands of God ; to be kind and charitable to all Men ; to assist readily, and be willing to do all good Offices, not only to their Friends, but even to their bitterest Enemies also ; in a Word, to raise their Virtue and Goodness far above the common Practice of Men, extending their Charity universally in imitation of the Goodness of God himself, who maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth Rain on the just and on the unjust ; These, Precepts, I say, are such, as no unprejudiced Philosopher would have been unwilling to confess were the utmost Improvements of Morality, and to the highest degree Perfective of humane Nature. In  
like



like manner ; The Duties of *Sobriety, Temperance, Patience and Contentment*, which our Religion enjoyns us to practise in *Our selves*, are so undeniably agreeable to the inward Constitution of humane Nature, and so perfective of it, that the principal design of all true Philosophy has ever been to recommend and set off these Duties to the best advantage ; Though as the Philosophers themselves have always confessed, no Philosophy was ever able to govern Mens practise effectually in these respects. But the additional Precepts, and the new Weight and Authority, which our Saviour has added to his Instructions of this kind ; teaching his Disciples to govern their very Thoughts, Mat. 5. 28. Desires and Inclinations ; to contemn and get above all the desires of this Mat. 6 ; 19, 24, &c. present World, and to set their Affections wholly upon that which is to come ; These are the things, which when the Christian Religion was in its primitive and purest State, worked Men up actually to such a pitch of cheerful and generous obedience to the Laws of God, and taught them to obtain such a complete Victory over the World, and over all the Desires

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fires and Appetites of Sense ; as the best Philosophers have acknowledged, their Instructions were never able to do. Lastly ; even those *positive and external Observances*, (the *Two Sacraments*,) which are instituted in the Christian Religion as means and assistances to keep Men stedfast in the practise of those *great and moral Duties* which are the *weightier Matters of the Law* ; even those positive Institutions, I say, are so free from all appearance of Superstition and Vanity, and so wisely fitted to the end for which they were designed ; that no Adversaries of Christianity, have ever been able to object any thing at all against the Things themselves, but only against certain Corruptions and Superstitions, which some, who call themselves Christians, have, directly in opposition to the true design of Christianity, introduced and annexed to them. For, what reasonable Man can pretend to say, that 'tis any way unreasonable or Superstitious, for every Member of a Society to be solemnly Admitted into his Profession, by a plain and Significant Rite, intitling him to all the Privileges, and charging him with all the Obligations, which belong to the Members of  
that

that Society as such ? which is the Design of *One* of the *Sacraments* : Or, that 'tis unreasonable and Superstitious, for Men frequently to commemorate with all Thankfulness the Love of their greatest Benefactor, and humbly and solemnly to renew their Obligations and Promises of Obedience to him ? which is the Design of the *Other*.

Let now any impartial Person judge, <sup>This, a great Evidence of a Religion coming from God.</sup> whether this be not a wise and excellent Institution of *practical* Religion ; highly conducive to the Happiness of Mankind ; and worthy of God to be established by Revelation, when Men had confessedly corrupted themselves to such a degree, that not only the Light of Nature and right Reason was altogether insufficient to restore them, but even That Light it self (as Cicero \* expressly acknowledges)

no where appeared. Let any impartial Person judge, whether a Religion that tends thus manifestly to the recovery of the rational part of God's Creation, to restore Men to the Imitation and Likeness of God, and to the Dignity and highest Improvement of their Nature ; has not within it self an in-

**T**rinisick

\* — ut Naturæ Lumen nusquam apparuit. Cic. *Tusc. Qu. lib. 3.* See this Passage cited before at large, pag. 196.



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trinick and very powerful Evidence of its being truly Divine. Let any one read the *fifth, sixth and seventh Chapters of St Matthews Gospel*, and judge if they do not, as it were, *set before his Eyes* such a lovely Image and Represen-

† *Formam ipsam, & tanquam Faciem honesti; quæ si Oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret Sapientiæ. Cic. de Offic. lib. 1.*

tation of true Virtue, as *Plato* † said could not but charm Men with the highest degree of love and admiration imaginable. In

a Word, let any Man of an honest and sincere Mind consider, whether That Practical Doctrine has not even in *it self* the greatest Marks of a divine Original; wherein whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are *of good report*, if there be any *Virtue*, if there be any thing *praise-worthy*; all these, and these only, are the things that are earnestly recommended to Mens practise. What wise Precept was ever delivered by any Philosopher of any Sect, which is not more plainly laid down by our Saviour and his Apostles? And not only so; but inforced moreover with greater efficacy and strength? founded upon

upon nobler and more consistent Principles ? urged with greater Weight and Authority ? and pressed with more powerful and affecting Arguments ? Nay, neither is this all the difference even in respect barely of the Excellency of the Doctrine it self. For the Philosophers taught indeed many excellent moral Truths ; but some upon one occasion and upon one Set of Principles, some upon another ; and every one of them were mistaken in some Instances of Duty, and mingled particular Superstitions and false Notions with their good Instructions, and built their *Doctrine* upon no sure foundation of consistent Principles ; and all of them (as has been before shown) were very imperfect and deficient, and far from being able to make up an entire and complete Scheme of the whole Duty of Man in all

Cases : But now \* to put together all the wise and good Precepts that ever were delivered by any wise

\* Οὐχ ὅτι ἁμότευιά οἶσι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδάγματα τὰ Χριστῶ. ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκ ἐστὶ πάντη ὁμοία. ὡς περὶ ἐδὲ τὰ ἡν' ἁλλων. --- ἐκαστος γὰρ πρὸς

ἀπὸ μέρες τὰ ἀποκριματικὰ δεῖς λόγους τὸ συζητῆς ὁρῶν, καλῶς ἐφθέρχεται. --- ὅσα ἐν ᾧ πᾶσι καλῶς εἴρη, ἡμῶν ἡν' χριστιανῶν οἶσι.  
*Justin. Apolog. I.*

Quod si extitisset aliquis, qui veritatem sparsam per singulos, per sectasq; diffusam, colligeret in unum ac redigeret in corpus ; is profecto non dissentiret a nobis. Sed hoc nemo facere, nisi veriperitus ac sciens, potest. Verum autem non nisi ejus scire est, qui sic doctus a Deo. *Lactant. lib. 7.*

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Men of any Sect and in any Age; to improve and exalt every one of them, to the highest possible degree of excellency and perfection; to separate and lay aside all the Superstitious Opinions and Practises, that had been mingled by all or any of the different Sects of Philosophers, or Teachers of Religion in any Nation, with their respective moral Instructions; and to supply all those Doctrines, wherein both moral Philosophy and the additional Institutions of all Religions in the World, had in the whole been hitherto altogether deficient; and all this, in one plain, entire and regular System, upon the Foundation of certain and consistent Principles; This is the peculiar Character of the Christian Institution; and all this could never have been done by any Man, but one sent immediately from God. Upon this consideration alone, all sincere Deists (if any such there be) who really are what they pretend to be, who believe the Being and Attributes of God, and are firmly convinced of the Obligations of Virtue and natural Religion, and the certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments; must needs by their own Principles be  
strongly



strongly inclined to embrace the Christian Religion ; to believe, at least to hope confidently, that a Doctrine so plainly fitted to recover Men out of their universally corrupt estate, and restore them to the Knowledge and Favour of God, is truly Divine ; and to entertain it with all cheerfulness, as what in it self has those manifold marks of Goodness and Perfection, which are themselves sufficient to satisfy a good Man, that it cannot be any thing else than a Revelation from God, even

† though it had wanted all those outward Proofs and divine and miraculous Testimonies, which shall hereafter be mentioned in their proper place.

† Sed si vel causa id efficeret, certissime philosopharetur ; & quamvis non posset divinis testimoniis illa defendere, tamen seipsam veritas illustraret suo lumine. Lactant. lib. 7.

XI. Secondly, The Motives, by which the Christian Religion inforces the Practise of the Duties it enjoyns, are such as are most suitable to the excellent Wisdom of God, and most answerable to the natural Expectations of Men.

1. The Acceptableness of true Repentance, in the sight of God ; and the certain Assurance of Pardon upon such Repentance ; which the Christian Religion affords us ; is a most powerful  
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of the acceptable-  
ness of  
true Re-  
pentance,  
as a Mo-  
tive to Obe-  
dience,

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and necessary *Motive* to frail and sinful Creatures, to incourage and support them effectually in the practise of their Duty. 'Tis indeed in general evidently most agreeable to right Reason and to Mens natural Notions of God, to believe him placable and merciful and willing to forgive: But since at the same time it cannot be proved by any Arguments from Reason, that God is *absolutely obliged* to forgive; and 'tis confessedly evident, that it becomes the Supreme Governour of the Universe, to vindicate the Honour and Authority of his Laws and Government, to give some evidences of his Hatred and Indignation against Sin, and sometimes by instances of Severity to prevent Sinners from abusing his Mercy and Patience; no less than that 'tis agreeable to his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, to suffer his Anger to be by some means appeared; No Motive in this case can be imagined more expedient and powerful, to incourage Sinners to return to the practise of their Duty, and to perswade them to continue therein immoveable for the future; nothing can be imagined more reasonable and satisfactory to the Mind of Man, and more agreeable to the excellent

cellent Wisdom of God, and worthy of the supreme and infinitely merciful Governour of all Things ; than such a positive Declaration of the *Acceptableness of sincere Repentance*, and such an authentick Assurance of *Pardon and Forgiveness* thereupon, as under the Christian Dispensation the Divine Goodness and Mercy has found means to afford unto us, in such manner as is at the same time abundantly consistent with the Honour and Dignity of the Laws of God, and with his irreconcilable Hatred against all Unrighteousness and Sin.

2. That *divine and supernatural Assistance*, which, under the Christian Dispensation, they who sincerely endeavour to obey the Will of God, have encouragement to hope for, upon all necessary occasions ; is another powerful *Motive*, to support Men effectually in the Practise of their Duty. The wisest of the Philosophers, were so far sensible of the great Corruption and Depravity of Humane Nature in its present State ; they were sensible that such was the Carelessness, Stupidity, and Want of Attention, of the greater part of Mankind ; so many the early Prejudices and false Notions taken in by evil

*Of the divine Assistance, as another Motive to Obedience.*



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\* pag. 194

etc. &

238, 244,

& 247

etc.

Education ; so strong and violent the unreasonable Lusts, Appetites and Desires of Sense ; and so great the Blindness, introduced by superstitious Opinions, vitious Customs, and debauched Practises through the World ; that (as has been \* before shown,) they themselves openly confessed, they had very little hope of ever being able to reform Mankind with any considerably great and universal Success, by the bare force of Philosophy and right Reason ; but that, to produce so great a change, and enable Men effectually to conquer all their corrupt Affections, there was need of some supernatural and divine Assistance, or the immediate Interposition of God himself. Now this *divine Assistance* is vouchsafed to Men under the Christian Dispensation in such a manner, as (from what has been already said concerning the judgment of the Wise of the Antient Philosophers in this matter,) appears to be undeniably agreeable to the natural Expectations of right Reason, and suitable to the best and worthiest Notions that Men have ever by the Light of Nature been able to frame to themselves concerning the Attributes and Perfections of God. If ye, says our Saviour, *being*

Luk. 11.  
123.

being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? The Effect of this divine Assistance, evidenced it self in a very visible and remarkable manner in the primitive times, by

† the sudden wonderful and total Reformation of far greater numbers of wicked Men, than ever were brought to Repentance by the Teaching and Exhortations of all the Philosophers in the World:

And even at this Day, notwithstanding all the Corruptions introduced among Christians, I think it can hardly be denied by any Unbelievers of Revelation, but that there are among us many more Persons of all conditions, who worship God in sincerity and simplicity of Heart, and live in the constant practise of all righteousness, holiness, and true Virtue; than ever were found in any of the most civilized nations, and most improved by Philosophy, in the heathen World.

3. The Rewards and Punishments which the Christian Religion proposes, to Obedience or Disobedience; are a

† Da mihi virum, qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrenatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum, quam ovem, reddam. Da libidinosum, &c. *Lactant. lib. 3.*

Παρεῖ μὲν τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν εἰς πρ, &c. *Origen advers. Cels. lib. 1. See this Passage cited above, pag. 237.*

*Of the clear Discovery of future Rewards and Punishments, as another Motive to Obedience.*

Motive,

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*Motive*, perfectly agreeable to Mens natural Hopes and Fears, and worthy of God to make known by positive and exprefs Revelation. For since 'tis confefſedly ſuitable to the divine Wiſdom, to make variety of Creatures, endued with very different Powers and Faculties, and capable of very different kinds and degrees of improvement; and ſince all rational Creatures, by reaſon of that natural Liberty of Will which is eſſentially neceſſary to their being ſuch, cannot but be capable of exalting and improving their Nature by the praſtiſe of Virtue and the Imitation of God, and on the contrary of depraving and debaſing their Nature by the praſtiſe of Vice and alienation of themſelves from God; It follows undeniably, (as has been \* before ſhown by a more particular deduction,) that 'tis highly agreeable to the Light of Nature and to right Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that God, the Supreme Governour and Diſpoſer of all things, will finally make a juſt and ſuitable diſtinction between his Creatures, by the diſtribution of proportionable Rewards and Punishments. Nevertheless, both the Truth it ſelf of theſe final Rewards and Punishments



nishments, was so far called in Question, and † rendered doubtful and uncertain, by the Disputations even of the <sup>† pag. 226.</sup> <sup>Gr.</sup> Wisest Philosophers that ever lived; and those who did in general believe the Truth and Certainty of them, had yet so very blind and obscure notions of what Nature and Kind they were to be; having their imaginations strangely prejudiced with Poetical fictions, and fabulous stories; that the setting this matter clear and right, and the supplying this single defect in the Light of Nature, was a thing highly worthy of Divine Revelation: It being plainly a very different thing, and of very different Force as to the influencing Mens Actions, for Men to be able to argue themselves into a *reasonable Expectation* of future Rewards and Punishments; and to be *certainly assured* of the reality of them by Express Testimony of Divine Revelation. And accordingly by divine Revelation in the Gospel, this defect of the Light of Nature *Is* now actually supplied in such a manner; Life and Immortality *are* so brought to Light; and the Wrath of God *is* so revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men; that

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that this very thing, the clear and distinct and consistent account which the Gospel gives us of these final rewards and punishments, (which, though indeed in themselves so absolutely necessary, that without them no tolerable vindication could be made of the Attributes of God, yet neither by the Light of Nature, nor by any positive Institution of Religion, excepting only the Christian, were they ever clearly and plainly represented to Mankind, so as to have their full and proper effect upon the hearts and lives of Men;) This very thing, I say; the clear, distinct, and consistent account which the Gospel gives us of these final rewards and punishments, is it self no contemptible argument of the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Revelation. By the certain Knowledge of these Rewards and Punishments it is, that the Practise of Virtue is now established upon a sure Foundation: Men have now abundantly sufficient encouragement, to support them in their Choice of Virtue, and in their constant adherence to it, in all cases and under all circumstances that can be supposed: There is now sufficient Weight on the  
side

side of Virtue, to enable Men to conquer all the Temptations of the Devil, the Flesh, and the World; and to despise the severest Threatnings, even Death it self: *This is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* The only Difficulty in this matter, arising from the *Duration* of the final punishment of the Wicked, shall be considered when I come to discourse of the Articles of our *Belief*.

XII. *Thirdly, the peculiar Manner and Circumstances, with which the Christian Religion enjoyns the Duties, and urges the Motives before mentioned; are exactly consonant to the Dictates of sound Reason, or the unprejudiced Light of Nature; and most wisely perfective of it.*

For, What can be more agreeable to the Light of Nature, and more evidently perfective of it; than to have those Duties, which Nature hints at *only in* The Proposition proved by particular instances. *general, explained fully and largely, and urged in particular, and inculcated upon the meanest capacities with great Weight and Authority, and exemplified in the Lives of holy Persons proposed as Patterns for our Imitation? What can be more perfective of the Light of Nature,*



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Nature, than to have those great *Motives* of Religion, the Rewards and Punishments of a Future State, which Nature *only obscurely* points at, described to us most *plainly, affectionately, and lively* ? What can be more perfective of the Light of Nature, than to have the *means of attoning for Sin*, which Nature discovers *only the want of*, plainly declared and exhibited to us ? What can be more perfective of the Light of Nature, than such a discovery of the *heinousness of Sin* and the *necessity of Holiness*, as the *Death of Christ* and the *Purity of the Gospel* does make unto us ? In fine, What can more effectually perfect the Religion of Nature, than the *gathering together the Worshipers of the True God, into One Body* ? the *causing them to enter into solemn Obligations, to live suitably to their holy profession* ; the *giving them gracious Assurances that true Repentance shall be accepted for what is past, and sincere renewed Obedience for the future* ? the *uniting them by a few positive Rites in one Religious as well as Civil Communion, for mutual assistance and improvement* ? and the *establishing a certain Order or perpetual Succession of Men, whose constant Business*

it

it may be, to explain the great Duties of Religion to persons of meaner capacities ; to urge and inforce the Practise of them ; to set before Men the reasons of their duty, and the necessity of it ; to shew them clearly and impartially the danger of neglecting it, and the great advantage of performing it sincerely ; in a word, to instruct the ignorant, and to admonish the Wicked ; to reduce those that err, to comfort the doubting, to reprove the obstinate ; and to be Instruments of conveying to Men all proper Assistances, to enable them to perform their whole Duty effectually ?

If these things be the Ordinances of One, who came to contradict the dictates of right Reason, and not to perfect the Law of Nature, but to destroy it ; then let all wise Men for ever forsake the Assemblies of Christians, and profess themselves again Disciples of the Philosophers. But if these things be perfectly agreeable to Nature and right Reason, and tend exceedingly to the supplying the Deficiencies thereof ; then let none under pretence of maintaining Natural Religion, revile and blaspheme the Christian, least they be found liars unto God.

The many Contentions indeed, about Opinions of great Uncertainty and lit-

*An answer  
to the Ob-  
jection  
drawn  
from the  
Divisions  
among  
Christians.*

tle

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tle Importance, which, to the very great Scandal of Christianity, have in several Ages of the Church, been with unseasonable Zeal kept up, instead of promoting the universal Interest of true practical Religion and Virtue; have, it must be confessed, given some *Occasion* to the Enemies of our most holy Religion, to blaspheme and revile both It and the Teachers of it. But though such things as these, have indeed afforded them too plausible an *Occasion*, yet they have not given them any just *Reason*, so to do. For the acknowledged corruption of a Doctrine or Institution in any particular *part* or respect, is by no means a weighty or real Objection against the Truth of the *whole*: And there has always been extant a sufficient Rule, to enable sincere persons, in the midst of the greatest disputes and contentions, to distinguish the *Doctrine of God* from the *Opinions of Men*; The Doctrine of Christ having been plainly and fully delivered in our Saviours own Discourses, and in the writings of his immediate Followers the Apostles; who cannot with any reason be imagined either to have misrepresented it, or to have represented it



it imperfectly. But besides : I think it can hardly be denied even by our Adversaries themselves, but that in all Times and Places, where Christianity has been professed in any tolerable degree of Purity ; whatever contentions and disputes may have arisen about particular, and perhaps unnecessary, Doctrines ; yet the great, the most necessary, and fundamental Doctrines of religion, concerning God and Providence, concerning the gracious Method of God's reconciliation with penitent Sinners, concerning the necessity of true Piety, Righteousness and Sobriety, concerning a Judgment to come, and the final Reward of the Righteous, and the Punishment of wicked Men, in such a manner as will effectually vindicate both the Justice and Goodness, the Wisdom and Honour of God ; these things, I say, have, notwithstanding all Differences concerning smaller matters, been nevertheless at the same time universally and constantly taught, pressed and inculcated, to Persons of all Capacities, by the earnest and continual preaching of all the Ministers of the Gospel ; with an effect infinitely more considerable and visible; both in extent and duration,

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than by the Teaching of any Heathen Philosophers that ever lived: Which shows undeniably the Excellency at least, if not the Divine Authority of the Christian Institution, in this particular respect.

XIII. *Fourthly, All the [Credenda or] Doctrines, which the true, simple, and uncorrupted Christian Religion requires our particular assent to, or firm belief of, as either being themselves of necessity to eternal Salvation, or closely connected with such as are so; are, though indeed many of them not discoverable by bare Reason unassisted with Revelation, yet, when discovered by Revelation, apparently most agreeable to sound unprejudiced Reason; have every one of them a natural Tendency, and a direct and powerful Influence, to reform Mens minds and correct their manners; and do together make up an infinitely more consistent and rational Scheme of belief, than any that the wisest of the antient Philosophers ever did, or the cunningest of modern Unbelievers can invent or contrive.*

*Of the One  
Supreme  
God.*

I. *That there is One only living and true God; existing of himself, by the necessity of his own Nature; absolute-ly*

ly Independent, Eternal, Omnipresent, Unchangeable, Incorruptible ; without Body, Parts or Passions ; of infinite Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom ; of perfect Liberty, and Freedom of Will ; of infinite Goodness, Justice and Truth, and all other possible Perfections ; so as to be absolutely Self-sufficient to his own infinite and unalterable Happiness : This is not only the first and principal Article of the Christian Faith, but also the first and most evident Truth that the Light of Nature it self teaches us ; being clearly demonstrable, upon certain and undeniable Principles of right Reason.

2. *That this Supreme Self-Existent Cause* of the e-  
and Father of all Things, did from E- ternal Ge-  
ternity generate of his own Substance a neration of  
Divine Person or Emanation from Him- the Son of  
self ; stiled the *Logos*, the *Word*, or *Wisdom*,  
or *Son of God* ; *God of God* ; in whom  
dwells the fulness and perfection of all  
the divine Attributes, excepting only  
that of Self-Origination ; being the I- Col. 1, 15.  
mage of the *Invisible God*, the brightness  
of his *Fathers Glory*, and the express Heb. 1, 3.  
Image of his Person ; having been in the  
beginning with God ; partaker with him Joh. 1, 2.  
of his *Glory before the World was* ; the 17, 5.



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Heb. 1, 3. *upholder of all things by the Word of his*  
 Rom. 9, 5. *Power ; and himself over all God bles-*  
 & Joh. 1, 1. *sed for ever : This Article , I say ,*  
 though not indeed discoverable by bare Reason, yet, when made known by Revelation , appears very consistent with right Reason, and contains nothing that implies any manner of Absurdity or Contradiction in it.

\* Ο Ν γε θεος αἰώνιον  
 ἐστὶ φῶς, ἔτε ἀρχαῖμνον ἔτε  
 ληξόν ποτε ἐκέν αἰώνιον  
 πρόσκειται, καὶ σώεσιν αὐτῷ  
 τὸ ἀπαύγασμα, ἀναρχον καὶ  
 ἀειγμῆς, παρφαυρόμην αὐτῷ  
*Athanas.*

For \* in like manner as it is evident that the Sun, if it was supposed to have been Eternal, would from Eternity have sent forth its Beams of Light, of the

same Nature and duration with it self : So there is nothing absurd, or any way contrary to reason, in believing, that with God the Father, the Supreme Self-Existent Cause of all Things, there coexisted from Eternity, by eternal and complete Communication of the Divine Essence, an || Emanation from himself, partaking equally with him of all the Divine Attributes, excepting only that of Self Origination. Which is what

|| Ἀπαύ-  
 γασμα  
 τὸ δόξης  
 αὐτῷ.

Heb. 1. 3.

† Θεός ἐκ  
 Θεῶ, in  
 contradi-  
 ction  
 to Αὐτῷ-  
 ὁ Θεός.

See this excellently explained in the learned Bishop Bull's *Defensio fidei Nicenæ*. Sect. 4.

It seems a very great perverseness in <sup>The per-</sup>some modern pretenders to Reason, to <sup>verseness</sup> exclaim here as they do, against this Do- <sup>of the De-</sup>ctrine, as if it was absolutely <sup>niers of</sup> impossible, <sup>this Do-</sup> *absurd, and contradictory to Reason:* <sup>ctrine.</sup>

When 'tis well known that the wisest and learnedest of the antient Philosophers, who were certainly as good Judges of *right Reason*, and of what was contrary to it and inconsistent with it, as any of the Moderns; and who lay under fewer prejudices in this respect; received and taught some Doctrines, as in their Opinion not only consistent and reconcileable with Reason, but also as most consonant to it and even deducible from it; which yet were at least as difficult to comprehend, as any thing in this Article of the Christian Faith: So that 'tis evident those Men would not have made any Objection against this Article of Faith, upon that account; but must needs have received it with all readiness, upon the Authority of Revelation; being indeed not at all more difficult and shocking to Reason, than some things which they already believed without any pretense of such divine Authority. What *Plato* delivers concerning [the λόγος or Νῆς] the Di-

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vine *Word* or *Wisdom*, as concerning a Person coexisting eternally with God the first Cause ; with how great obscurity soever he speaks, and how little soever he truly understood concerning it ; shows yet at least thus much, that he would never have made *This* Objection against the Doctrine of the *Eternal Generation* of the Son of God, that it was *contradictory* and not reconcileable to *right Reason*. And they who believed it possible, that even *Finite, Visible and Created Beings* mere *external Effects*, might yet nevertheless have existed from Eternity ; as *Aristotle*, one of the greatest Masters of Reason that ever was, and all the Followers of *Plato*, have unanimously asserted ; in maintaining the Eternity of the *World* upon this Principle, that the *Will of God* and his *Power of Acting* being necessarily as *Eternal* as his *Essence*, the *Effects* of that *Will and Power* might also, as they conceived, be co-

val in \* *Time*, though not in *Order of Nature*, with the *Will and Power* themselves : These Men, I say, could still much less have charged with Absurdity and Contradiction, the  
Notion

\* Νῦν ἀπὸ λόγου τοῦ, ὅτι, ὡς καὶ τοῦ ἀποστόλου λέγει, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ χρόνου, ἀλλ' αἰῶνος. See also the Places cited in my former Volume, pag. 68.



Notion of a Divine Person, or Emanation from the *Substance* of the Supreme God and Father of all Things, having eternally coexisted with him. And I believe there are at this Day very few Adversaries of Revelation, who being asked their Opinion about the Time and Manner of the original Production of *Things*, would not affirm something in most respects as incomprehensible, as is this present Article of the Christian Faith. So that it is with the greatest perverseness and unreasonableness imaginable, that they charge us with requiring them to believe Impossibilities and Absurdities upon This Account.

Indeed if any Men, pretending to be *wise above and beyond what is written*, have at any time given such Explications of this great Doctrine of the *Eternal Generation of the Son of God*, or such Accounts of his Nature and Attributes, as can by any just and necessary consequence be reduced to imply or involve any Contradiction; (which perhaps some of the † Schoolmen have but too justly been accused of doing;) such explications are without

† It is not to be denied but that the Schoolmen, who abounded in Wit and Leisure, though very few among them had either ex-

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ast Skill in the Holy Scriptures, or in Ecclesiastical Antiquity and the Writings of the antient Fathers of the Christian Church: I say, it cannot be denied but that these speculative and very acute Men, who wrought a great part of their Divinity out of their own Brains, as Spiders do Cobwebs out of their own Bowels; have started a thousand Subtilties about this Mystery, such as no Christian is bound to trouble his Head withal; much less is it necessary for him to understand those *Niceties*, which we may reasonably presume that they who talk of them did themselves never thoroughly understand; and least of all is it necessary to believe them. *Arch-B. Tillotson, Sermon concerning the Unity of the Divine Nature.*

It were to be wished, that some *Religionists* did not here symbolize too much with the *Atheists*, in affecting to represent the *Mystery* of the *Christian Trinity*, as a thing directly contradictory to all humane Reason and Understanding. *Cudworth's System, pag. 560.*

\* *Arch-B. Tillotson, Sermon II. concerning the Divinity of our Saviour.* which see.

*Of the Holy Spirit.*

Now the same that is said of the *Son*, may in like manner, with very little variation, be, very agreeably to right Reason, understood concerning the *Eternal*

all controversy false, and very injurious to Religion. But as this Doctrine is delivered in Scripture, and expounded by the most antient and general Tradition of the Primitive Church; I cannot see but it was with very great Reason said by an \* excellent Prelate of our Church, that he *was not afraid here likewise*, [*viz. in the Question, Who have right Reason on their side,*] to joyn issue with the Adversaries of our Saviours Divinity; and was contented to have this Matter brought to a fair Trial at the Bar of Reason, as well as Scripture expounded by the general Tradition of the Christian Church.

humane Reason and Understanding.

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ternal Proceſſion or Emaning of the Holy Spirit.

3. That the Universe, the Heavens <sup>of the</sup> and the Earth, and all things that are <sup>Creation of</sup> therein, were Created and Made by <sup>the Uni-</sup> God ; and this, by the Operation of his Son, the Eternal Word or Wiſdom of the Father ; *by whom* the Scripture <sup>Heb. 1, 2.</sup> ſays that God *made the Worlds* ; that <sup>Eph. 3, 9.</sup> *by him* God created *all things* ; that <sup>Col. 1, 16.</sup> *by him* were *all things* created, *that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt* ; that <sup>Joh. 1, 3.</sup> *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made* : All this likewise, is very agreeable to ſound unprejudiced Reaſon. For, that neither the whole, nor any part of the World, neither the Form, nor Motion, nor Matter of the World, could exiſt *of it ſelf*, by any Neceſſity in its own Nature ; is abundantly demonſtrable from undeniable principles of Reaſon ; as has been ſhown in my former Diſcourſe. Conſequently, both the whole World, and all the variety of things  
that



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that now Exist therein, must of Necessity have received both their Being it self, and also their form and manner of being, from God the alone Supreme and Self-existent Cause; and must needs depend upon his Good pleasure every moment, for the continuance and preservation of that Being. Accordingly, if we set aside the *Epicureans*, whose absurd Hypothesis has long since been given up even by all Atheists themselves; and some very few others, who with no less Absurdity contended that the World was in its present Form Self-existent and Necessary; All the Philosophers of all Ages, (even † not excepting those who held the Eternity of the World,) have unanimously agreed in this great Truth, that the World evidently owes both its Being and Preservation to God the Supreme Cause and Author of all Things. And then, that God made the World by the Operation of his Son; though this could not indeed be known certainly without express Revelation; yet is it by no means incredible, or contrary to right Reason. For, to the judgment of Reason, it is the same thing, whether God made the World immediately by himself, or mediately by the Ministration

† See former Volume. pag. 69.

stration of a Second Principle : And what *Plato* and his Followers have said concerning that Eternal *Noûs* or Mind, whom they frequently stile *Δημιουργός* the Minister or Workman by whom God framed all things ; proves undeniably thus much at least, that the Doctrine delivered in Scripture concerning this Matter, cannot be rejected as inconsistent and irreconcilable with right Reason.

4. That, about the Space of 6000 Of the Formation of the Earth. years ago, *the Earth was without Form and void*, that is, a confused *Chaos* ; Gen. 1, 2. out of which God framed this beautiful and useful Fabrick we now inhabit, and stocked it with the Seeds of all kinds of Plants, and formed upon it *Man* and all the other Species of Animals it is now furnished with ; though the precise Time indeed, when all this was done, could not now have been known exactly, without Revelation ; yet even at this day, there are remaining many considerable and very strong rational Proofs, which make it exceeding probable, (separate from the Authority of Revelation,) that this present Frame and Constitution of the Earth, cannot have been of a very much longer

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longer date. The universal *Tradition* delivered down from all the most antient Nations of the World, both learned and barbarous ; The constant and agreeing *Doctrine* of all Antient Philosophers and Poets , concerning the Earth's being formed within such a period of Time, out of Water or a Chaos ; The manifold *Absurdities and Contradictions* of those few Accounts, which pretend to a much greater Antiquity ; The *Number of Men*, with which the Earth is at present inhabited ; The *late Original of Learning and all useful Arts and Sciences* ; The *Impossibility*, that universal Deluges or other Accidents, should at certain long Periods have oft-times destroyed far the greatest part of Mankind, with the Memory of all former Actions and Inventions ; and yet never have happened to destroy them All ; The changes that must necessarily fall out naturally in the Earth, in vast length of Time, by the Sinking and Washing down of Mountains, the Consumption of Water by Plants, and innumerable other such like Accidents ; These, I say, and many more Arguments, drawn from Nature, Reason and Observation, make that account of the  
Time



Time of the Earth's Formation exceedingly probable in it self, which from the Revelation delivered in Scripture-History we believe to be certain.

5. *That* the same God who Created all things by the Word of his Power, and upholds and preserves them by his continual Concourse, does also by his All-wise *Providence* perpetually govern and direct the issues and events of things; takes care of this lower World, and of all, even the smallest things, that are therein; disposes things in a regular order and succession in every Age, from the beginning of the World to its final period; and inspects, with a more particular and especial regard, the moral Actions of Men: This, as it is far more expressly, clearly and constantly taught in Scripture, than in any of the Writings of the Philosophers; so it is also highly agreeable to right and true Reason. For, that an Omnipresent and infinitely Wise Being, cannot but know every thing that is done in every part of the Universe, and with equal ease take notice of the minutest things as of the greatest; That an infinitely Powerful Being, must needs govern and direct every thing in such manner and to such ends,

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as he knows to be best and fittest in the whole ; so far as is consistent with that Liberty of Will, which he has made essential to all rational Creatures ; And that an infinitely Just and Good Governour, cannot but take more particular and exact notice of the moral Actions of all his rational Creatures, and how far they are conformable or not conformable to the rules he has set them ; All this, I say, is most evidently agreeable to right Reason, and, as

† pag. 23.

has been † before shown, deducible from it.

*of Paradise, and the Loss of it by Sin.*

6. That God, after the Formation of the Earth, created Man at first *upright and innocent*. and placed him in a *happy and paradisiacal State*, where all things useful and profitable for him abounded without labour or sorrow ; And that *Sin* was the original Cause, that Now on the contrary the very *ground is cursed and barren for our sake, and in sorrow we eat of it all the Days of our Life ; that thorns also and thistles are brought forth to us, and in the sweat of our face we eat bread, till we return unto the ground :* This likewise is very reasonable and credible in it self : As appears, not only from the abstract consideration

Gen. 3, 17, 18 & 19.

sideration of the nature of the thing ; but also from the general Opinion that the antient learnedest Heathens entertained, upon very obscure and uncertain Tradition, that the original State of Man was innocent and simple, and the Earth, whereon they dwelt, \* *fruitful of it self, and abundant with all plenty ; but that God, for the Sin of Man, changed this Happy Constitution of things, and made Labour necessary for the support of our Lives.*

\* Τὸ παλαιὸν πάντ' ἦν ἀλ-  
φύτων καὶ ἀλάδρων πλήρη, κα-  
τάπερ καὶ νῦν κόρυμβος καὶ κρή-  
ναι δ' ἔρρεον, αἱ μὲν ὕδα-  
τος, γαλακτὸς δ' ἄλλαι·  
καὶ ὁμοίως αἱ μὲν μέλιτι, αἱ δ' οἶνῳ, τινὲς δ' ἐλαίῳ· ὡς  
πλησμονῆς δ' οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρυφῆς, εἰς ὅσον ἔξέπεσον·  
Ζεὺς δ' ὀμώσας τὴν κατὰσιν,  
ἠεὶ ἀνίστα πάντα, καὶ διὰ πόντος  
βίον ἀπέδειξε. Calanus Indus  
apud Strabon. lib. 15.

7. That in process of Time, after the <sup>Of the</sup> first entrance of Sin into the World, <sup>Flood.</sup> Men by degrees corrupted themselves more and more ; till at length God, for the † punishment of their Sin and incorrigible-ness, brought upon them a general Flood, which destroyed them all, except a few Persons preserved for the restoration of humane race ; is a Truth delivered down to us, not only by Authority of

† Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ γῆ διεσπάρη  
μοῖρα ἔξήτηλτο ἐργασίῳ ἐν  
αὐτοῖς, πολλῶν τε θνητῶν καὶ  
πολλὰς ἀνακείρανται, τὸ δ' ἄνθρωπον ἡδὲ ἐπε-  
ράται, τότε Θεὸς ὁ Θεῶν  
Ζεὺς, ἅτε δυνάμει κα-  
ταρῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐνόησας  
χρὸς ἐπεικὴς ἀδελφῶς δια-  
τιθέμενον, δίκῃ αὐτοῖς ἐπι-  
δεῖναι βουλόμενος, &c. Plato  
in Critia sive Atlantico.

Scrip-



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Scripture, but also by the concurrent Testimony of almost all Heathen Philosophers and Poets : And the Histories of all Nations backwards, terminate in it : And, (which is the most remarkable thing of all, because it confirms the only particular, that can in this matter be called in question, *viz.* the *Universality* of this Deluge;) The present visible Frame and Constitution of the Earth throughout, the Disposition and Situation of the several Strata of different Kinds of Matter, whereof it is composed ; the numberless Shells of Fishes, Bones of other Animals, and parts of all kinds of Plants, which in every Country and in almost every place are at great variety of Depths found inclosed in Earth, in Clay, in Stones, and in all sorts of Matter ; are such ocular Demonstrations of the Earth's having been once (the whole Surface of it at least) in a state of Fluidity ; that whosoever has seen the Collections of this kind made by the very ingenious *Dr Woodward* and others, must absolutely abandon all Use both of his Senses and Reason, if he can in the least doubt of this Truth.

8. *That*

8. *That* God, after the Flood, made particular Revelations of himself and of his Will to the *Patriarchs*; is a Thing very credible in it self, for the same reasons that I have † before shown in general, that the Expectation of some Revelation from God, was a † Of Gods revealing himself to the Patriarchs, and giving the Law to the Jews. reasonable and probable Expectation. † pag. 245.

*And*, that, after this, God should vouchsafe by Express Revelation to give a *Law* to the whole Nation of the *Jews*, consisting very much in Sacrifices, and in external rites and ceremonious observances; cannot with any just reason be rejected as an incredible Fact; if we consider, *that* such a kind of Institution was necessary in those Times and Circumstances, to preserve that Nation from the Idolatry and worship of false Gods, wherewith the Countries around them were overspread; *that* those rights and ceremonies were typical of, and preparative to, a higher and more excellent Dispensation; *that* They were continually told by their Prophets, that their observance of those rights and ceremonies was by no means so highly acceptable to God, nor so absolutely and indispensably insisted upon by him, as Obedience to the Moral Law; and *that* the whole matter

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of Fact relating to that Revelation, is delivered down to us in a History, on which the Polity of a whole Nation was founded at a time when no body could be ignorant of the truth of the principal Facts, and concerning which we can now have no more reason to doubt, than of any History of any antient matter of Fact in the World. The most considerable and reallest difficulty, viz. why this Favour was granted to that single Nation only, and not to all the rest of the World likewise; is to be accounted for by the same reasons, which prove (as has been \* before shown) that God was not obliged to make known the *Revelation of the Gospel*, to all Men alike.

*Of the other particulars of Scripture-History in the Old Testament.*

9. *That* all the other particulars of *Scripture-history* contained in the *Old Testament*, are true relations of matter of Fact; (not to insist Now on the many Arguments which prove in general the Antiquity, Genuineness, and Authority of the Books themselves;) will to a rational Inquirer appear very credible from hence; that very many of the particular Histories, and some even of the minuter Circumstances also of those Histories, are confirmed by concurrent Testimonies of profane



fane and unquestionably unprejudiced Authors. Of which, *Grotius*, in his excellent Book of † the Truth of the Christian Religion, has given us a large Collection. As particularly; that the manner of the Formation of the Earth out of a Chaos, is mentioned by the Antientest Phœnician, Ægyptian, Indian and Greek Historians; the very Names of *Adam* and *Eve*, by *Sanchuniathon* and others; the longevity of the Antediluvians, by *Berosus* and *Manethos* and others; the Ark of *Noah*, by *Berosus*; many particulars of the Flood, by *Ovid* and others; the Family of *Noah* and two of every kind of Animals, entering into the Ark with him, mentioned by *Lucian* himself, as a Tradition of the Antient Grecians; The Dove which *Noah* sent out of the Ark, by *Abydenus* and \* *Plutarch*; the building of *Babel*, by *Abydenus*; the burning of *Sodom*, by *Diodorus Siculus* and *Strabo* and *Tacitus* and others; several particulars of the History of *Abraham* and the rest of the Patriarchs, by *Berosus* and others; many particulars of *Moses's* life, by several antient writers; the eminent Piety of the most antient Jews, by *Strabo* and

† lib. 1.  
c. 16. and  
lib. 3. c.  
16. where  
see the Ci-  
tations at  
large.

\* Δελφικῶν φασὶ περι-  
εσθῆν ἐν τῇ λαβρῶν ὁ ἀρι-  
μένω, δὴλωμα γυῖσται,  
χειμῶν ὁ μὲν εἶσω πάλιν  
ἐνδομένω, ἐνδίας δ' ὑπο-  
πῆξ. *Plutarch: utrum Ter-  
restria an Aquatica animan-  
tia plus habeant solertia.*

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*Justin*; divers Actions of *David* and *Salomon*, in the *Phenician Annals*; some of the Actions of *Elijah*, by *Mender*, and confessed by *Julian* himself; the History of *Jonah*, under the name of *Hercules*, by *Lycophron* and *Æneas Gazeus*; and the Histories of the following times, by many more Authors. Besides that, (as † learned Men have upon exceeding probable grounds supposed,) many of the most Antient Scripture-histories are acknowledged and asserted in the writings of the Poets, both Greeks and Latins; the true Histories being couched under fictitious names and fabulous representations.

† See *Stillingfleet's*  
*Origin. Sacrae*, lib. 3,  
cap. 5. And  
*Bocharti*  
*Phaleg*, &  
*Vossius de*  
*Idololatria*.

*Of God's*  
*sending his*  
*Son into*  
*the World*  
*for the Re-*  
*demption*  
*of Man-*  
*kind.*

10. *That* God, in the fulness of Time, that is, at that Time which his infinite Wisdom had fore-appointed, which all the Antient Prophecies had determined, and which many concurrent circumstances in the state of the Jewish Religion, and in the disposition of the Roman Empire, had made a fit season for the reception and propagation of a new Institution of Religion: *that* God, I say, at that Time, should *send his Son*, the eternal Word or Wisdom of the Father, that Divine Person by whom, (as has been before shown) He created the World,  
and

and by whom he made all former particular Manifestations of himself unto Men ; *To* take upon him our humane Nature, and therein to make a full and particular Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind, who by Sin had corrupted themselves and forfeited the Favour of God, so that by the bare Light of Nature they could not discover any certain means, by which they could be satisfactorily and absolutely secure of regaining that Favour ; *To* preach unto Men Repentance and Remission of Sin, and, by giving himself a Sacrifice and Expiation for Sin, to declare the Acceptableness of Repentance and the certainty of Pardon thereupon, in a Method evidently consistent with all necessary Vindication of the Honour and Authority of the Divine Laws, and with Gods irreconcilable Hatred against Sin ; *To* be a Mediatour and Intercessour between God and Man ; *To* procure the particular Assistance of Gods Holy Spirit, which might be in Men a new and effectual principle of a Heavenly and Divine Life ; In a word, *To* be the Saviour and Judge of Mankind, and finally to bring them to Eternal Life : All this, when clearly and expressly revealed, and by good Testimony pro-



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ved to be so revealed, is apparently agreeable and very credible to right and true Reason. As, (because it is the main and fundamental Article of the Christian Faith,) I shall endeavour to make out more largely and distinctly ; by showing in particular, that none of the several Objections, upon which *Speculative* Unbelievers reject this Doctrine, do at all prove any inconsistency in the belief of it, with sound and unprejudiced Reason.

*That it is not unreasonable to suppose God making a Revelation of his Will to Men.*

For, First, It cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed in the general, that God should make a *Revelation of his Will* to Mankind ; since on the contrary, (as has been before proved at large.) it is very agreeable to the Moral Attributes of God, and to the Notions and Expectations of the Wisest and most rational Men that lived in the Heathen-World.

*That it is not unreasonable to believe, that God would appoint a Sacrifice or Expiation for Sin.*

Secondly, It cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed, that in such a Revelation, wherein God freely proclaims Remission of Sin and the Acceptableness of Repentance, he should nevertheless have appointed such a *Sacrifice or Expiation for Sin*, as might at the same time be a sufficient Testimony of his irreconcilable Hatred against

against it. For though, by the Light of Nature, it was indeed exceeding probable and hopeful, that God would forgive Sin upon true Repentance; yet it could not be proved, that he was absolutely obliged to do so, or certainly that he *would* do so: On the contrary, there was reason to suppose, that, in vindication of the Honour and Dignity of his Laws, he would require some further satisfaction and Expiation. And accordingly we find the Custom of *Sacrificing*, to have prevailed universally over the Heathen-World in all Ages; Which, how unreasonable soever an Expectation it was, to think that the Blood of Beasts could truly expiate Sin, yet thus much it plainly and undeniably shows, that it has been the common Apprehension of Mankind in all Ages, that God would not be appeased nor pardon Sin without some Punishment and Satisfaction; and yet at the same Time they had good hopes, that upon the Repentance of Sinners, God would accept some other satisfaction instead of the Destruction of the Offenders. 'Tis therefore plainly agreeable to right reason, to believe that God, in vindication of the Honour of his Laws, and

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for a Testimony of his Hatred against Sin, should appoint some Sacrifice or Expiation for Sin, at the same time that he forgives the Sinner upon his true Repentance.

*That it is not unreasonable to believe, that a Mediator should be appointed between God and Man.*

Thirdly, It cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed, that a *Mediatour* or *Intercessour* should be appointed between God and Man, through and by whom the Prayers of Sinners may be offered up so as to be acceptable in the Sight of God. 'Tis well known, the generality of the wisest Heathens thought it agreeable to Reason, to make use of Subordinate Intelligences, Dæmons or Heroes, by whom they put up their Prayers to the Superiour Gods, hoping that by the Mediation of these Intercessours, the unworthiness of their own Persons and the defects of their Prayers might be supplied, and they might obtain such merciful and gracious Answers to their Prayers, as they could not presume to hope for upon their own Account. Wherein though those Pagans laboured indeed under very great Uncertainty, in doing a thing for which they had no sufficient warrant, and in using Mediatours whom they neither knew distinctly to have any Being, nor could they however have any good



good Security that such Mediation would be acceptable to the Supreme God; Yet at the same time This undeniably proves, that it is by no means inconsistent with right reason, to believe that a Mediatour may by divine Authority be appointed between God and Sinful Men, to be their Intercessour and Advocate with a justly offended God.

Fourthly, The greatest real Difficulty in this matter, to the judgment of right Reason, seems to arise from the consideration of the *Dignity of the Person*, whom we believe to have given himself a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of Mankind; viz. how it is possible, that the *Eternal Son of God* should be *Incarnate* and united with Human Nature in one Person; how it is conceivable, that God should *condescend* so far, and do such great things for his Creatures; and above all, how it is consistent with reason, to suppose God condescending to do so much for such *frail and weak* Creatures as Men, who in all appearance, seem to be but a very small, low, and inconsiderable part of the Creation. And here indeed it must readily be acknowledged that humane Reason could never have discovered

*of the objection drawn from the Dignity of the Person, whom we believe to be our Mediatour and Redeemer.*

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red such a Method as this, for the reconciliation of Sinners to an offended God, without express Revelation. But then neither on the other side, when once this Method is made known, is there any such Difficulty or Inconceivableness in it, as can reasonably make a wise and considerate Man call in question the truth of a well-attested Revelation, merely upon that account ; Which indeed, any plain Absurdity or Contradiction in the Matter of a doctrine pretended to be revealed, would, it must be confessed, unavoidably do. For, as to the *Possibility of the Incarnation* ; since no Man means thereby, that the Divine Nature was contained in or circumscribed by the Humane ; much less, that the Divine Nature Suffered in and with the Humane ; but only that the two Natures were so united in one Person, that the Sufferings of the Human Nature acquired an infinite value by its Union with the Divine ; Whatever mysteriousness there confessedly was in the *Manner* of the Incarnation, yet, as to the thing it self, there is evidently no more unreasonableness in believing the possibility of it, than in believing the Union of the Soul and Body, or any other

cer-

certain Truth which we plainly see implies no Contradiction in the thing it self, at the same time that we are sensible we cannot discover the *manner* how it is effected. Again ; As to the incredibility of the Doctrine, that God should make so great a *Condescension* to his Creatures ; and that a Person of such Dignity, as the Eternal Son of God, should vouchsafe to give himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men : He that duly considers, how it is no diminution to the glory and greatness of the Creatour of all things, to inspect, govern, and direct every thing by his All-wise Providence through the whole Creation ; to take care even of the meanest of his Creatures, so that not a *Sparrow falls to the ground* or a *hair of our head perishes* without his knowledge ; and to observe exactly every parcel even of inanimate Matter in the Universe ; cannot with reason think it any real Disparagement to the Son of God, (though it was indeed a most wonderful and amazing Instance of Humility and Condescension,) that he should concern himself so far for sinful Men, as to appear in their Nature to reveal the Will of God more clearly to them,

to



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to give himself a Sacrifice and Expiation for their Sins, and to bring them to Repentance and Eternal Life. The greatest Enemies and Deriders of Christianity, have asserted things, *far more* incredible, to have been done upon *far less* occasions: Witness what *Julian*

\* Ὁ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὅς ἐαυτὸν ἔ-  
'Ασκληπιὸν ἐβλόνησεν· εἰς ὃ  
ἔ γλυῖ δια τὴν ἡλίαν γόνιμα  
ζῶης ἐνέφηνεν· ἔτ' ἐπὶ  
γῆς ὅς ἐρανὲ ποιησάμενος  
περόσθον, ἐνοσιδῶς μὲν περὶ  
ἔ' Ἐπίδωκεν ἐφάνη. *Julian.*

the Apostate \* thought fit to believe concerning *Æsculapius* coming down from Heaven, and conversing upon Earth in a visible form, only to teach Men the Art of

healing Diseases: And *Modern* Unbelievers, who seem willing in the contrary extreme, to deny Gods having *any* regard, or taking *any* care in any respect, for the Welfare and Happiness of his Creatures; are forced, if they will go about to give any account or explication of things, to invent much more incredible Hypotheses, dishonourable to God, and utterly inconsistent with his Divine Attributes. Indeed, if we will consider things impartially, so far is it from being truly any diminution of the greatness and glory of God, to send his Son into the World for the Redemption and Salvation of

Man-

Mankind; that, on the contrary, it is a means of bringing the very greatest Honour to the Laws and Government of God, that can be imagined. For, what can be imagined more honourable, and worthy of the Supreme Lord and Governour of all things; than to show forth his Mercy and Goodness, in forgiving the Sins of frail and fallible Creatures, and suffering himself to be reconciled to them upon their true Repentance; and yet at the same time to cause such an Expiation to be made for Sin, by the Sufferings and Death of his own Son in their Nature, as might be an abundant Evidence of his irreconcilable Hatred against Sin, a just Vindication of the Authority and Dignity of his Laws, and a sufficient and effectual warning to deter Men from Sin, to create in them the greatest dread and detestation of it, and for ever to terrify them from venturing upon wilful transgression and disobedience? 'Tis true, no Man can pretend certainly to say, but God by his absolute Sovereignty and Authority, might, if he had so pleased, have pardoned Sin upon Repentance, without any Sacrifice or Expiation at all; But this Method of doing it by the  
Death

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Death of Christ, is more wise and fit, and evidently more proper and effectual to discountenance and prevent presumption, to discourage Men from repeating their Transgressions, to give them a deep Sense of the heinous Nature of Sin, and to convince them of the excellency and importance of the Laws of God, and the indispensable Necessity of paying Obedience to them ; Forasmuch as it shows us, that at the same time that God was willing to save the Sinner, yet, least encouragement should be given to Sin by letting it go unpunished, he did not think fit to forgive the Transgressions of Men without great Sufferings in our Nature, and to do away the guilt of our Sins but upon such hard Terms as the Death of his own Son. So that in this Dispensation, *Justice and Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.* And by how much the greater the Dignity of the Person was, who gave himself thus a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men ; of so much the greater Weight and Force is this Argument to deter Men for the future from Sin, and to convince them of the Necessity of Obedience. Wherefore so far is it from being true, that the

con-



consideration of the Dignity of the Person suffering, is a real Objection against the credibility of the Doctrine ; that on the contrary, that very consideration contains the highest Vindication imaginable, of the Greatness and Honour and Authority of the Laws of God ; and at the same Time, the greatest possible Instance or Expression of his Mercy and Compassion towards Men ; agreeable to our Natural Notions of his Divine Attributes. And then, as to the last part of this Difficulty, *viz.* how it can be consistent with Reason, to suppose God condescending to do so very great Things, for such *mean and weak* Creatures, as Men are ; who, in all appearance, seem to be but a very *small, low and inconsiderable* part of the Creation ; forasmuch as the whole Earth it self, is but a little spot that bears no proportion at all to the universe ; and, in all probability of Reason, the large and numberless Orbs of Heaven cannot but be supposed to be filled with Beings more capable, than we, to show forth the praise and glory of their Almighty Creatour, and more worthy to be the Objects of his Care and Love : To this part of the Difficulty, I say,  
the

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the Answer is very easy ; *That* the Mercy and Love of the infinitely good God, is extended equally over all his Works ; *That*, let the Universe be supposed as large, and the rational Creatures, with which it is furnished, as many and excellent, as any one can imagine ; yet Mankind is plainly the chief, indeed the only Inhabitant, for whose sake 'tis evident this our Globe of Earth was formed into a habitable World ; and this our Earth, is, as far as we have any means of judging, as considerable and worthy of the Divine Care, as most other Parts of the System ; and this our System, as considerable, as any other single System in the Universe ; And finally, *That* in like manner as the same Divine Providence, which presides over the whole Creation, does particularly govern and direct every thing in this our lower World, as well as in every other particular part of the Universe ; so there is no real Difficulty to right Reason, in conceiving, that the same Divine *Logos*, the *Word* or *Wisdom* of the Father, which in various Dispensations, according to the particular needs and exigencies of Mankind, has made vari-

bus Manifestations of God, and discoveries of the Divine Will, to Us here upon Earth; may also, for ought we know, have to other Beings, in other parts of the Universe, according to their several capacities or wants, made different Manifestations of God and Discoveries of his Will, in ways of which we can know nothing, and in which we have no Concern: There being nothing in this, at all contrary to the Nature of God, or the Condition of Things.

Fifthly and lastly, If any one thinks it unreasonable to be believed, that God should send his Son into the World for the Redemption of Mankind; and yet that this appearance of the Son of God upon Earth, should not be till the latter Ages of the World; and, after he has appeared, yet his Appearance not be made known equally to all Nations: Such a one \* must likewise for the same reason affirm, that 'tis unreasonable to believe the Necessity and Obligations even of Natural Religion it self, because 'tis plain all Men are not furnished equally with the same Capacities and Opportunities of understanding those Obligations; And consequently no Deist can consist-

\* See before, pag. 261.

Y ently



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ently with his own Principles, make *This* Objection against the Truth of Christianity. He must likewise for the same Reason affirm, that God is obliged in all other respects also to make all his Creatures equal; to make Men, Angels; to endue all Men with the same Faculties and Capacities, as Any; at least, to make all Men capable of the very same Kind and the same *Degree* of Happiness, and to afford to All of them all the very same means or opportunities of obtaining it: In a word, that infinite Wisdom cannot reasonably be supposed to have a Right of making variety of Creatures in very various Circumstances; Which is an assertion palpably most absurd, in Experience false, and a very unjust diminution of Gods Sovereignty in the World. But besides: Tho' the Redemption purchased by the Son of God, is not indeed actually made known unto All Men; yet as no Man ever denied, but that the Benefit of the Death of Christ extended backwards to those who lived before his appearance in the World; so no Man can prove, but that the same benefit may likewise extend it self forwards to those who never heard of his appearance, tho' they lived after it.

## and Revealed Religion. 323.

ii. That the History of the Life of <sup>of the c-</sup> Christ, contained in the New Testa- <sup>ther parti-</sup> ment, is a true Relation of matters of <sup>culars of</sup> Fact; (not to insist here on the Testi- <sup>Scripture-</sup> mony of his Disciples and Followers, <sup>history con-</sup> which shall be considered hereafter in <sup>tained in</sup> its proper place;) will to a rational In- <sup>the New</sup> quirer appear very credible from hence; Testament  
that very many particulars of that History, are confirmed by concurrent Testimonies of profane and unquestionably unprejudiced Authors. That, before the coming of our Saviour, there was a general Expectation spread over all the Eastern Nations, that out of *Judæa* should arise a Person, who should be Governour of the World; is expressly affirmed by the Roman Historians,

\* *Suetonius* and † *Tacitus*.

That there lived in *Judæa*, at the time which the Gospel relates, such a person as *Jesus of Nazareth*; is acknowledged by all Authors, both Jewish and Pagan, who have written since that Time. The Star that appeared at his birth, and the Journey of the Chaldean Wise-Men, is mentioned by

\* *Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut Judæa profecti rerum potirentur: Sueton.*

† *Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis Sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur, Tacit. lib. 21.*

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\* See the Place cited by  
*Grotius, de Veritate Christi-*  
*anae Religionis, lib. 3. c. 14.*

† Cum audisset [*Augu-*  
*stinus,*] inter pueros quos in Sy-  
ria *Herodes Rex Judæorum*  
*intra bimatum iussit interfici,*  
*filium quoq; ejus occisum; ait,*  
*Melius est Herodis porcum esse*  
*quam filium. Macrob. lib. 2.*  
*cap. 4.* [A Testimony so  
very remarkable and perti-  
nent, that 'tis strange how  
*Grotius* could omit to menti-  
on it in the place now cited.]

\* See the places cited by  
*Grotius, de Veritate Christ.*  
*Rel. lib. 2. c. 5.*

\* *Chalcidius* the Platonist.  
*Herods* causing all the Chil-  
dren in *Bethlehem* under  
two Years old to be slain, and a Reflexion  
made upon him on that occasion by the  
Emperor *Augustus*, is re-  
lated by † *Macrobius*. Ma-  
ny of the *Miracles* that Je-  
sus worked in his Life-time,  
are, as to the matters of  
Fact; particularly his heal-  
ing the lame and the blind,  
and casting out Devils;  
expressly owned by the  
most implacable Enemies  
of Christianity, by \* *Celsus*  
and *Julian* and the Authors  
of the *Jewish Talmud*. And

how the Power of the Heathen Gods  
ceased after the coming of Christ, is ac-  
knowledgeed by || *Porphyry*, who attri-  
butes it to their being Angry at the set-  
ting up of the Christian Religion which  
he stiles impious and profane. Many  
particulars of the collateral History con-  
cerning *John Baptist*, and *Herod* and *Pi-*  
*late*; (not to mention the famous Testi-  
mony concerning *Jesus* himself, because it  
is by Some suspected not to be genuine,  
notwithstanding it is found in all the  
antient

¶ *ibid.*



antient Copies;) are largely recorded by *Josephus*. The Crucifixion of Christ un-

der *Pontius Pilate*, is related by † *Tacitus*? And diverse of the most remarkable Circumstances attend-

ing it, such as the *Earthquake* and miraculous *Darkness*, were recorded in the

\* publick Roman Registers, commonly appealed to by the first Christian Writers as what could not be denied by the adversaries themselves; and are in a very particular manner

|| *Phlegon*. Then, concerning the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ; these depend on the general Proofs of the credibility of his Disciples Testimony, and other following evidences; which will be considered hereafter in their proper place.

ἐν ἐρανῶ φανῆναι καὶ σεισμός, &c. *Phlegon*.

12. That God has appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Person whom he has ordained, in order to reward every Man according to his Works; is a Doctrine perfectly agreeable to right Reason,

† *Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat. lib. 15.*

\* *Eum mundi casum relaturn in Arcanis vestris habetis. Tertullian. Apol.*

|| Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίῳ καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, ἣ βασιλεὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσαυραῶν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ μεγάλων πτεροφόρου σισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγγραφαι καὶ φλέγον. *Origen. adv. Cel. lib. 2.*

Τετάρτῳ δὲ ἔπειτα τῆς διακοσιοῦς δώδεκας Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἐκλείψις ἡλίου, μέγιστη καὶ ἐγνωσμένη ὡς περὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ αὐτοὶ

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son, and to our Natural Notions of the Attributes of God ; As may appear more particularly from what has been  
 \* pag. 168. \* before said concerning the Necessity and Certainty of another Life after this ; and is evident from the Opinion of all the wiser Heathens concerning this Matter. Neither may it perhaps be altogether impertinent to observe here, that the Poets both Greek and Latin have unanimously agreed in this one particular Circumstance, that Men after Death should not have judgment passed upon them immediately by God himself, but by *just Men* appointed for that purpose.

*Of the Resurrection of the Body.*

13. *That* in order to this final Judgment, not only the Soul shall survive the Dissolution of the Body, but the *Body it self* also shall be *raised again* : This Doctrine, though not indeed discoverable with any kind of certainty by the bare Light of Nature ; because the belief of the Souls Immortality (for ought that appears to Reason alone) is sufficient to answer all the purposes of a Future State, as far as is discoverable merely by the Light of Nature ; Yet this Doctrine, I say, of the *Resurrection of the Body*, when made known by

by Revelation, evidently contains nothing in it in the least contrary to right Reason. For, what reasonable Man can deny, but that it is plainly altogether as easy for God to raise the Body again after Death, as to create and form it at first? Some of the

\*Stoical Philosophers seem to have thought it not only possible, but even probable: And many of the Jews, who had no express Revelation concerning it, did yet believe it upon an ancient Tradition; as appears from all their Writings, and particularly from the Translation of the last Verse of the Book of *Job*, which according to the *Seventy* runs thus; So *Job* died, being old and full of Days; but 'tis written that he shall rise again with those whom the Lord raises up. The

only real difficulty in this Doctrine, seems to arise upon putting the supposition of one Body's being turned into the Nourishment, and becoming part of the Substance of another; so as that the same parts may equally belong to two Bodies, to both of which

\* Δῆλον ὡς ἐδὲν ἀδύνατον  
ἔῃ ἡμᾶς, μετὰ τὸ τελευτῆσαι,  
πάλιν περιόδων πινῶν ἐίλυ-  
μένων χροῖον, εἰς ὃ νῦν ἐστὶν  
ἀποκαταστήσασθαι ὁ ἡμᾶς. Chry-  
sippus citat. a Lactant. lib.  
7.

† Γέγραπται ὅτι αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεται, μετ' ὧν ὁ  
κύριος ἀνίστησι. Job 42.  
ult.



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it shall nevertheless be absolutely impossible that the same parts should be restored. But this Objection, as great and principal a Difficulty as it is, is really but a great Trifle. For there does not at all appear any absolute necessity, that to constitute the same Body there must be an exact restitution of all and only the same Parts: And if there was any such Necessity; yet even still, without making that hard supposition (which \* *Grotius* and others have done) that God by a miraculous Providence always interposes to prevent the parts of one humane Body from incorporating with and becoming the nourishment of another; (for I cannot see any sufficient Ground to deny, but that it may be possible in Nature, for barbarous *Cannibals*, if any such there be, to subsist for some time and live wholly one upon another, if deprived of all other sustenance :) Without any such hard suppositions as these, I say, it is easy to imagine many ways, by which the Resurrection of the same Body, properly speaking, shall nevertheless be very possible; and the whole Foundation of this, and all other difficulties of this kind, concerning the Parts and Forms and Magnitudes and Pro-

\* De Veritate Rel.  
Chr. lib.  
2. c. 10.

Proportions of our future Bodies, be entirely taken away.

As, First; No Man can say it is im-  
probable, (and they who have been  
most and best versed in Microscopical  
Observations, think it more than pro-  
bable,) that the *original Stamina*,  
which contain all and every one of the  
solid parts and vessels of the Body, not  
excepting even the minutest nerves and  
fibres, are themselves the *entire Body*;  
and that all the *extraneous matter*,  
which, coming in by way of Nourish-  
ment, fills up and extends the minute  
and insensible vessels, of which all the vi-  
sible and sensible vessels are composed,  
is not strictly and properly *Part* of the  
Body. Consequently, while all this *extra-  
neous matter*, which serves only to swell  
the Body to its just magnitude, is in *con-  
tinual Flux*, the *original Stamina* may con-  
tinue *unchanged*; and so, no Confusion of  
Bodies will be possible in Nature. There  
may be made many very considerable  
Observations, concerning the *determi-  
nate Figure* into which every respective  
Body unfolds it self by Growth, con-  
cerning the Impossibility of the Body's  
extending it self by any Nourishment  
whatsoever beyond that *certain Magni-  
tude* to which the original vessels are  
capable

*Of the Re-  
surrection  
of the same  
Body.*

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capable of being unfolded, and concerning the *Impossibility of restoring* by any Nourishment any the smallest vessel or solid part of the Body that has at any time happened to be mutilated by any Accident ; All which Observations, often and carefully made, will seem very much to favour some such Speculation as This.

Secondly, It may also be supposed otherwise, not without good probabili-

\* Ἡμεῖς μὲν ἔν τῃ φαινομένῃ  
τῇ διαφθορῇ σώμα ἐπὶ νέρ-  
χου εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν φύσιν,  
ὡς ἐδὲ τὴν διαφθορὰν καὶ κόκ-  
κον τὴν οἶτον λέγομεν ὅδ' ὁ-  
σπερ ἐπὶ τῇ κόκκῳ τὴν οἶτον ἐ-  
ξείρεται ὁ σῆκος, ὅτω λόγῳ πρὸς  
ἐγκειν τὸ σῶμα, αὐτὸ δ'  
μὴ φθινομένην ἐξείρεται τὸ σῶ-  
μα ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. *Origen.*  
*act. v. lib. 5.*

ty, that \* in like manner as in every Grain of Corn there is contained a minute insensible seminal principle, which is it self the entire future blade and ear, and, in due Season, when all the rest of the Grain is corrupted, evolves

and unfolds it self visibly into that form ; so our present mortal and corruptible Body may be but the *Exuviae*, as it were, of some hidden and at present insensible Principle, (possibly the present Seat of the *Soul*,) which at the Resurrection shall discover it self in its proper Form. This way also there can be no Confusion of Bodies, possible in Nature. And it is not without some Weight, that the Antientest Writers of the Church have al-



always made use of this very Similitude ; that the Apostle *St Paul* himself, alleges the same Comparifon ; and that the Jewish writers feem to have had fome obfcure glimpfe of this Notion, when they talked of a certain *incorruptible* part of the Body ; Though thefe latter indeed, explained themfelves very weakly and unphilofophically.

Many other ways perhaps may be imagined, by which the fame thing may be explained intelligibly. But thefe Speculations are nice and fubtle, and neither needful nor proper to be enlarged upon in this place. Only the bare mention of them, fhows the manifold *poſſibility* of the doctrine of the Refurrection; againſt the Objections of thoſe who would have it feem *contradictory*.

14. Laſtly ; *That* after the Refur-  
rection and the general Judgment, <sup>of the e-</sup>  
wherein every Man ſhall be judged ac-<sup>ternal</sup>  
cording to his Works ; they that have <sup>Happineſs</sup>  
done well, ſhall go into *everlaſting Hap-* <sup>of the</sup>  
*pineſs* ; and they that have done evil, <sup>Bleſſed,</sup>  
into *everlaſting Punishment* : is a Do-<sup>and the</sup>  
ctrine in it ſelf very credible, and rea-<sup>eternal</sup>  
ſonable to be believed. Concerning <sup>Puniſh-</sup>  
the *everlaſting Happineſs* of the Righte-<sup>ment of the</sup>  
ous, there is no diſpute ; it being evi-<sup>Damned.</sup>  
dent

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dent that God in his infinite Bounty may reward the sincere Obedience of his Creatures, as much beyond the merit of their own weak and imperfect Works, as he himself pleases. But the *everlasting Punishment* threatned to the Wicked, has seem'd to many a great difficulty ; since it is certain from our Natural Notions of the Attributes of God, that no Man shall be punished beyond the just demerit of his Sins. Here therefore it is to be observed ; first, that no Man can say it is unreasonable, that they who by wilful and stubborn Disobedience to their Almighty Creatour and most merciful Benefactor, and by the habitual Practise of unrepented Wickedness, have, during this state of Trial, made themselves unfit for the enjoyment of that Happiness, which God has prepared for them that love and obey him ; should be *eternally rejected, and excluded* from it. Thus much, the wickedest of Men are willing enough to believe : And if bare *Deprivation of Happiness* was all the Punishment they had reason to fear, they would be well content to sit still in their Wickedness. But, is it at all agreeable to reason to believe, that the Punishment to be inflicted by the final Wrath of a provoked God upon

on

on his most obstinate and incorrigible Enemies, should be merely such a thing as is in its own Nature less dreadful and terrible, than even those Afflictions which by certain Experience we see in this present Life fall sometimes upon such Persons with whom God is not angry at all? Is it agreeable to reason to believe, that God, who, as is evident by experience, suffers the very best of his own Servants, for the Punishment of their Sins, or even only for the Trial of their Virtue, to fall sometimes under all the Calamities and Miseries, which 'tis possible for the cruellest and most powerful Tyrants to invent and execute; should punish his most obstinately rebellious and finally impenitent Creatures, with nothing more than the *Negation of Happiness*? There must therefore be some *sensible and positive Punishment*, besides the mere negative Loss of Happiness. And whoever seriously considers the dreadful Effects of Gods Anger in this present World, in the Instances of the general *Deluge*, the overthrow of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, the amazing Calamities which befell the whole *Jewish Nation* at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and other



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other such like Examples ; in some of which Cases, the Judgments have fallen upon mixt Multitudes of good Men and bad together ; not to mention the Calamities which sometimes befall even good Men by themselves : Whosoever, I say, seriously considers all this, cannot but frame to himself very terrible apprehensions of the *Greatness* of that Punishment, which the despised Patience of God shall finally inflict on the impenitently wicked and incorrigible, when they shall be separated and be by themselves. And then, as to the *Duration* of this Punishment ; no Man can presume in our present State of Ignorance and Darknes to be able truly to judge, barely by the strength of his own natural Reason, what *in this respect* is or is not consistent with the Wisdom and Justice and Goodness of the Supreme Governour of the World ; since we neither know the *Place*, nor *Kind*, nor *Manner*, nor *Circumstances*, nor *Degrees*, nor *All the Ends and Uses* of the final Punishment of the Wicked ; Only this one thing we are certain of, that the Justice of God will abundantly vindicate it self, and all Mouths shall be stopped before him, and be forced to

acknowledge the exact Righteousness of all his Judgments, and to condemn their own Folly and Wickedness; forasmuch as the *Degrees* or *Intenseness* of the Punishment which shall be inflicted on the Impenitent, shall be exactly proportionate to their Sins, as a recompense of their demerits, so that no Man shall suffer more than he has deserved. This being once clearly established; the Difficulty about the *Duration* of the Punishment, will not appear so insuperable to right Reason. For nothing can be more evident, than that God may justly banish the Wicked *eternally* from his Kingdom of Glory, and from that Happiness which is his Free and undeserved Gift to the Righteous; and the *positive* punishment which shall be inflicted upon them in that State of Eternal Rejection, shall undoubtedly be such and so proportionated to Mens deserts, as the Righteous Judge will then make appear before Men and Angels, to be just and wise and necessary, and such as becomes the infinite Wise Lord and Governour of the Universe to inflict. The Wisest of the Heathen Philosophers, without the help of Revelation, have taught

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taught, and did believe it agreeable to

\* Οἱ δ' ἂν δόξωσιν ἀνιάτως  
ἔχειν διὰ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἀ-  
μαρτημάτων, τούτους ἢ περ-  
σῆκεσα μοῖρα ῥίπτει οἷς τὸν  
Τάρταρον, ὃ δὲν ἔποτε ἐμβαί-  
ναι. *Plato in Phaed.*

Ὡς περ σὺ κολάσεις αἰωνί-  
ως νομίζεις, ἔγωγε καὶ οἱ τῶν ἱε-  
ρῶν ἐκείνων ἐξηγῆται τελη-  
ταί τε καὶ μυσαρώσι. *Cels.*  
*apud Origen. lib. 8.*

Οἱ δ' ἀδικοὶ πάντων αἰ-  
νίοις κακοῖς συνέξουσιν. *Id.*  
*ibid.*

right Reason, that \* the  
Punishment of the incor-  
rigible should be *without*  
*End.* And *We* know not  
how many Wise Designs  
God may serve thereby :  
We know not but that,  
as God has *now* discov-  
ered to *Us* in some measure  
the Fall and Punishment

of *evil Angels*, to be a warning to *Us* ;  
so he may *hereafter* use the Example of  
the Punishment of *Wicked and incorrigi-  
ble Men*, to be a means of preserving  
*other Beings* in their Obedience. And  
many other Considerations there may  
possibly be, very necessary to enable us  
to judge rightly concerning this Mat-  
ter ; which, in this present State, we  
have no sufficient means of coming to  
the Knowledge of.

*All the  
Articles of  
our Belief,  
agreeable  
to right  
Reason.*

Thus all the *Credenda*, or *Doctrines*,  
which the Christian Religion requires  
our Assent to, as of necessity to be be-  
lieved ; are in the First place, though  
indeed many of them not discoverable  
by bare Reason unassisted with Revela-  
tion, yet, when discovered by Revela-  
tion



tion, apparently most agreeable to sound and unprejudiced Reason.

† Τα ἡ μισέας ἡμῶν, ἡ κοινὰς ἐννοίας ἀρχὴν συναναγγέλλουσα. Origen. advers. Cels. lib. 3.

Secondly, Every one of these Doctrines, has a natural Tendency, and a direct and powerful Influence, to reform Mens Lives and correct their Manners. This is the great End, and ultimate Design, of all true Religion; And 'tis a very great and fatal mistake, to think that any Doctrine or any Belief whatsoever, can be any otherwise of any Benefit to Men, than as it is fitted to promote this main End. *There was none of the Doctrines of our Saviour, as an* \* excellent Prelate of our Church admirably expresses this matter, *calculated for the gratification of Mens idle Curiosities, the busying and amusing them with airy and useless Speculations; Much less were they intended for an Exercise of our Credulity, or a tryal how far we could bring our Reason to submit to our Faith: But, as on the one hand they were plain and simple, and such as by their agreeableness to the rational Faculties of Mankind, did highly recommend themselves to our Belief; so on the other hand they had an immediate relation to Practice, and were the genuine Principles*

Every one of them has a direct Tendency and powerful Influence to reform Mens Manners.

\* ArchBp of York's Sermon before the Queen on Christmas Day 1704.

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*and foundations upon which all humane and divine Virtues were naturally to be superstructed. Particularly ; What can be a more necessary and excellent Foundation of true Religion, than That Doctrine which the Christian Religion clearly and distinctly teaches us, concerning the Nature and Attributes of the One only true God ; without any of that Ambiguity and Doubtfulness, those various and inconsistent Opinions and Conjectures, those uncertain and oft-times false Reasonings concerning the Nature of God, which, notwithstanding the natural possibility of discovering very many of the Attributes of God by the Light of true Reason, did yet in fact overspread the greatest part of the Heathen World with Polytheism or Atheism ? What can be so certain a Preservative against Idolatry, and the Worship of false Gods ; as the Doctrine, that *the Universe, the Heavens and the Earth, and all things contained therein, are the Creatures and Workmanship of the One true God, and have a continual dependence upon him for the Preservation of their Being ?* What can be so sure a Ground of true Piety and Reliance upon God, as the clear Christian Doctrine concern-*

concerning *Providence*, concerning God's perpetually governing and directing the issues and events of all things, and inspecting with a more especial regard the moral actions of Men; which Doctrine was perplexed by the Philosophers with endless Disputes? What can be so just a Vindication of the Goodness of God, and consequently so necessary in order to our maintaining in our Minds worthy and honourable Notions concerning him; as the Doctrine, that *God created Man at first upright*, and that *the Original of all Evil and Misery is Sin*; the want of a clear knowledge of which Truth, extremely perplexed the Heathen World, and made many recurr to that most absurd Fiction of a Self-existent Evil Principle? What can be a more proper Motive to Piety, than the Doctrine that *the Deluge* and other remarkable Calamities which have befallen Mankind, were sent upon them by God's immediate Direction, as *Punishments* for their Wickedness? What can be a greater encouragement to the practise of Holiness, than the Doctrine, that *God has at several times vouchsafed to make several particular Revelations of his Will to*

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Men,



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Men, to instruct and support them more effectually in that Practise ? But above all ; What Doctrine could ever have been imagined so admirably fitted in all respects to promote all the Ends of true Religion, as that of the *Incarnation of the Son of God* ? Which way could Men have been filled with so deep a sense of the Mercy and Love of God towards them, and have been instructed in all divine Truths in a Method so well accommodated to their present infirmities ; as by *God's sending his own Son, the Eternal Word or Wisdom of the Father, to take upon him our Nature, and therein to make a general Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind* ? How could the Honour and Dignity and Authority of the Laws of God have been so effectually vindicated, and at the same time so satisfactory an assurance of Pardon upon true Repentance have been given unto Men ; as by this Method, of *the Son of God giving himself a Sacrifice and Expiation for Sin* ? What could have been a more glorious Manifestation of the Mercy and Compassion of God, and at the same time a more powerful means to discountenance Mens presumption, to discourage them

them from repeating their Transgressions, to give them a deep sense of the heinous Nature of Sin, and of Gods extreme Hatred and utter Irreconcilableness to it, and to convince them of the Excellency and Importance of the Laws of God, and the indispensable Necessity of paying Obedience to them; than this Expedient of *saving Sinners by the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God, and by establishing with them a new and gracious Covenant upon the Merits of that Satisfaction?* How could Men be better encouraged, to begin a religious Life; than by having such a *Mediatour, Advocate, and Intercessour* for them with God, to obtain pardon of all their Frailties; and by being assured of the *Assistance of the Spirit of God*, to enable them to conquer all their corrupt Affections, and to be in them an effectual Principle of a heavenly and divine Life? In fine; What stronger and more powerful Motives could possibly have been contrived, to perswade Men to live virtuously, and to deter them from Vice; than the clear Discovery made to us in the Gospel, of *God's having appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness, every*

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*Man according to his Works ; and that they who have done well, shall be adjudged to everlasting Happiness ; and they that have done evil, to endless Punishment ; of which the Light of Nature afforded Men but obscure Glimpses ? And may we not here now, upon the whole, appeal even to our Adversaries themselves, whether in all and every one of these Doctrines there be not a more powerful, a more effectual method laid down, for the reforming humane Nature, and obliging the whole World to forsake their Sins, and to lead holy and virtuous Lives ; than was ever taught before ; nay, or than was possible to have been contrived by all the Wit of Mankind ? This is the great and highest recommendation of the Christian Doctrine : This is what, to a well-disposed Mind, would well-near satisfactorily prove, even without the addition of any external Testimony, that the Revelation of Christianity could not possibly but come from God ; Seeing that not only all its practical Precepts, but even all its *Articles of Belief* also, tend plainly to this one and the same End, to make Men universally amend and reform their Lives ; to recover and restore them*

to



to their original excellent State, from the Corruption and Misery which had been introduced by Sin; and to establish upon Earth the Practise of everlasting Righteousness, and entire and hearty Obedience to the Will of God: Which would have been the Religion of Men (had they continued Innocent) in Paradise, and now is the Religion of Angels, and for ever will be the Religion of Saints in Heaven. Vain Men may value themselves upon their speculative Knowledge, right Opinions, and True and Orthodox Belief, separate from the Practise of Virtue and Righteousness; But, as sure as the Gospel is true, no Belief whatsoever shall finally be of any Advantage to Men, any otherwise than only so far as it corrects their Practise, hinders them from being *Workers of Iniquity*, and makes them like unto God. Luk. 13, 27.

Lastly, All the Doctrines of the Christian Faith, do *Together* make up an infinitely more *consistent and rational Scheme of Belief*, than any that the Wisest of the Antient Philosophers ever *did*, or the cunningest of Modern Unbelievers *can* invent or contrive. This is evident from a summary View of the forementioned Scheme of the Christian

*And All of them Together, make up the most consistent and rational Scheme of Belief in the World.*

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Doctrines ; wherein every Article has a just dependence on the foregoing ones, and a close connexion with those that follow ; and the whole account of the Order and Disposition of Things from the Original to the Consummation of all Things, is one entire, regular, complete, consistent, and every way a most rational Scheme : Whereas the Wisest of the *Antient Philosophers*, that is, those of them who hit upon the greatest Number of single Truths, and taught the fewest Absurdities ; were yet

\* *Diverſi ac diverſe omnia, protulerunt, non annexentes nec cauſas rerum, nec conſequentias, nec rationes ; ut Summam illam, quæ continet univerſa, & compingerent & complerent. Laſtant. lib. 7.*

\* never able to make out any univerſal, entire, and coherent System of Doctrines, and Scheme of the *Whole State of Things*, with any manner of probability : And the cunning-

est of *Modern Deists*, (beſides that they muſt needs in their own Way believe ſome particular Things ſtranger and in themſelves more incredible than any of the forementioned Chriſtian Doctrines ;) cannot in the whole, as

† *pag. 15.* has been † before ſhown, frame to themſelves any fixt and ſettled Principles, upon which to argue conſiſtently ; but muſt unavoidably either

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be perplexed with inextricable Absurdities, or confessedly recur to down-right Atheism. There have indeed even among Christians themselves, been many Differences and Disputes about particular Doctrines: But, (excepting such as have intolerably corrupted the very fundamental Doctrines and even the main design it self of the whole Christian Dispensation; of which there are too many instances in Writers of the Romish Church especially;) these disputes among Christians, have not been, like those among the Philosophers, *de rerum summa*, concerning the whole Scheme and System of things, but only concerning particular explications of particular Doctrines; which kind of disputes do not at all \* affect the Certainty of the whole Religion it self, nor ought in reason to be any manner of hindrance to the † Effect which the plain and weightier and confessedly more important fundamental Doctrines ought to have upon the Hearts and Lives of Men.

\* Sed perturbat nos opinionum varietas, hominumque dissensio; & quia non idem contingit in sensibus, hos natura certos putamus; illa, quæ aliis sic, aliis secus, nec iisdem semper uno modo videntur, ficta esse dicimus. Quod est longe aliter. *Cic. de Legib. lib. I.*

† See above, pag. 288.



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*XIV. Fifthly; As this Revelation, to the judgment of right and sober Reason, appears even of it self highly credible and probable; and abundantly recommends it self in its native simplicity, merely by its own intrinsic goodness and excellency, to the praise of the most rational and considering Men, who are desirous in all their Actions to have satisfaction and comfort and good hope within themselves, from the Conscience of what they do: So it is moreover positively and directly proved, to be actually and immediately sent us from God; by the many infallible Signs and Miracles, which the Author of it worked publickly as the evidence of his divine Commission; by the exact completion both of the Prophecies that went before concerning him, and of those that He himself delivered concerning things that were to happen after; and by the Testimony of his Followers; which in all its circumstances was the most credible, certain, and convincing evidence, that was ever given to any matter of Fact in the World.*

*First, The Christian Revelation is positively and directly proved, to be actually and immediately sent to us from God; by the many infallible Signs and Miracles, which the Author of it work-*

*ed*

ed publickly as the Evidence of his Divine Commission.

Besides the great Excellency and Reasonableness of the *Doctrine* considered in it self, of which we have already treated; It is here of no small moment to observe, that the *Author* of it (separate from all external proof of his Divine Commission,) appeared in all his Behaviour, Words and Actions, to be

*of the Life and Character of our Saviour, as an evidence of the Truth of the Christian Revelation.*

neither an \* *Impostor* nor an *Enthusiast*. His Life was innocent and spotless, spent entirely in serving the Ends of Holiness and Charity, in doing good to the Souls and Bodies of

\* Περὶ τὸν δὲ αὐτῶν εἶ πο-  
τὲ πρὸς ἄλλος τοιοῦτος πλάνος  
ἰσχυρίζεται, πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπι-  
κειας, σωφροσύνης τε καὶ τῆς  
ἄλλης ἀρετῆς διδασκαλίας  
τοῖς ἀπειρωμένοις γερονδὲς αἰ-  
πος, &c. Euseb. Demonstrat.  
Evangelic. lib. 3. c. 3.

Men, in exhorting them to Repen-  
tance, and inviting them to serve and  
glorify God. When his bitterest E-  
nemies accused him, in order to  
take away his Life; they could not  
charge him with any appearance of  
Vice or Immorality: And so far  
was he from being guilty of what  
they *did* accuse him of, namely of  
Vain-glory and attempting to move  
sedition; that once, when the ad-  
miring People would by force have  
taken him and made him their King,  
he

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he chose even to work a Miracle to avoid that, which was the only thing that could be imagined to have been the Design of an *Impostor*. In like manner, whoever seriously considers the Answers he gave to all Questions whether moral or captious, his occasional Discourses to his Disciples, and more especially the Wisdom and Excellence of his Sermon upon the Mount, which is as it were the System and Summary of his Doctrine, manifestly surpassing all the moral Instructions of the most celebrated Philosophers that ever lived; cannot, without the extremest malice and obstinacy in the World, charge him with *Enthusiasm*.

*Of the Miracles of Christ as the Evidence of his Divine Commission.*

These Considerations cannot but add great Weight and Authority to his Doctrine, and make his own Testimony concerning himself exceedingly credible. But the *positive and direct* proof of his Divine Commission, are the *Miracles* which he worked for that purpose: His healing the Sick: His giving Sight to the Blind: His casting out Devils: His raising the Dead: The Wonders that attended his Crucifixion: His own Resurrection from the Dead: His Appearance afterwards to his Disciples:

And



And his Ascension visibly into Heaven.

These, and the rest of his stupendous Miracles, were, *to the Disciples that saw them*, sensible Demonstrations of our Lords Divine Commission. And *to those who have lived since that Age*, they are as certain Demonstrations of the same Truth, as the Testimony of those first Disciples who were Eye-witnesses of them, is certain and true.

To the *Disciples that saw them*, these Miracles were sensible and compleat Demonstrations of our Lord's Divine Commission; because they were so great and so many and so publick and so evident, that it was absolutely impossible they should be the Effect of any *Art of Man*, of any *Chance* or *Fallacy*: And the Doctrine they were brought to confirm, was of so good and holy a Tendency, that it was impossible he should be enabled to work them by the Power and Assistance of *Evil Spirits*: So that consequently, they must of necessity have been performed, either *immediately* or *mediately*, by God himself.

But here, because there have been many Questions raised, and some perplexity introduced, by the disputes and  
of Miracles in general.  
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different Opinions of learned Men concerning the *Power of working Miracles*, and concerning the *Extent of the Evidence* which Miracles give to the Truth of any Doctrine ; And it hath been much controverted, whether true Miracles can be worked by any less Power, than the immediate Power of God ; and whether to complete the Evidence of a Miracle, the Nature of the Doctrine pretended to be proved thereby, is requisite to be taken into the Consideration, or no : It may not perhaps be improper, upon this occasion, to endeavour to set this whole Matter in its true Light, as briefly and clearly as I can.

*That in respect of the Power of God, all things are alike easy.*

I *ſ* then, In respect of the *Power of God*, and in respect of the *Nature of the things* themselves absolutely speaking, all things that are possible at all, that is, which imply not a direct contradiction, are *equally and alike easy* to be done. The Power of God, extends equally to great things, as to small ; and to many, as to few ; And the one makes no more difficulty at all, or resistance to his Will, than the other.

Tis

## and Revealed Religion. 351

'Tis not therefore a right Distinction, to define or distinguish a *Miracle* by any *absolute difficulty* in the Nature of the thing it self to be done ; As if the things we call *natural*, were absolutely and in their own nature easier to be effected, than those that we look upon as *miraculous*. On the contrary, 'tis evident and undeniable, that 'tis at least as great an Act of Power, to cause the *Sun* or a *Planet* to move at all ; as to cause it to stand still at any Time : Yet this latter, we call a *Miracle* ; the former, not. And, to restore the dead to life, which is an Instance of an extraordinary *Miracle* ; is in it self plainly altogether as easy, as to dispose matter at first into such order, as to form a *humane Body* in that which we commonly call a natural way. So that, absolutely speaking, in *This strict and philosophical Sense* ; either nothing is miraculous, namely if we have respect to the Power of God ; or, if we regard our own Power and Understanding, then almost every thing, as well what we call natural, as what we call supernatural, is in *this Sense* really miraculous ; and 'tis only *usualness* or *unusual-*

*That therefore Miracles ought not to be defined by any absolute difficulty in the nature of the things themselves to be done.*



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*usualness* that makes the distinction.

What degrees of Power God may have communicated to Created Beings, is not possible for us to determine.

2. What *degrees of Power* God may reasonably be supposed to have communicated to *Created Beings*, to *subordinate Intelligences*, to *good or evil Angels*; is by no means possible for us to determine. Some things absolutely impossible for *Men* to effect, 'tis evident may easily be within the natural Power of *Angels*; and some things beyond the Power of *inferiour Angels*, may as easily be supposed to be within the natural Power of others that are *superiour* to them; and so on. So that, excepting only the Power of *Creating out of nothing*, which seems indeed to be absolutely incommunicable; we can hardly affirm *with any Certainty*, that any particular Effect, how great or miraculous soever it may seem to us, is beyond the Power of all *Created Beings* in the Universe to have produced.

That therefore a Miracle is not rightly defined to be such an effect, as could not have been produced by any less Power than the Divine Omnipotence.

'Tis not therefore a right Distinction, to define a *Miracle* (as some very learned and very pious Men have done,) to be such an Effect, as could not have been produced by any less Power than the *Divine Omnipotence*. There is no Instance of any *Miracle* in Scripture, which

which to an ordinary Spectator would necessarily imply an immediate Creation of something out of nothing: And consequently such a Spectator could never be *certain*, that the miraculous effect was beyond the Power of all created Beings in the Universe to produce. There is one Supposition indeed, upon which the Opinion of *all Miracles being necessarily the immediate effects of the Divine Omnipotence*, may be defended; And that is, if God, together with the natural Powers wherewith he hath indued all subordinate Intelligent Beings, has likewise given them a Law or Restraint, whereby they be hindred from ever interposing in this lower World, to produce any of those effects, which we call miraculous or supernatural: But then, how certain soever it is, that all Created Beings are under some particular Laws and Restraints; yet it can never be proved, that they are under such Restraints universally, perpetually, and without exception; And without this, a Spectator that sees a Miracle, can never be certain that it was not done by some Created Intelligence. Reduc-

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cing the natural Power of Creating Beings to as low a degree as any one can desire to suppose, will help nothing in this matter : For, supposing (which is very unreasonable to suppose) that the natural Powers of the highest Angels, were no greater than the natural Powers of Men; yet since thereby an Angel would be inabled to do all that invisibly, which a Man can do visibly ; he would even in this Supposition be naturally able to do numberless things, which we should esteem the greatest of Miracles.

*All things that are done in the World, are done either immediately by God himself, or by created Intelligent Beings ; Matter being capable of no Laws or Powers. And consequently there is, properly speaking, no such thing as the Course or Power of Nature.*

3. All things that are *Done* in the World, are done either immediately by *God* himself, or by *created Intelligent Beings* : *Matter* being evidently not at all capable of any *Laws* or *Powers* whatsoever, any more than it is capable of Intelligence ; excepting only this One *Negative Power*, that every part of it will, of it self, always and necessarily continue in that State, whether of *Rest* or *Motion*, wherein it at present is. So that all those things which we commonly say are the effects of the *Natural Powers of Matter*, and *Laws of Motion* ; of *Gravitation*, *Attraction*, or the



the like ; are indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly) the effects of *Gods* acting upon Matter continually and every moment, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created Intelligent Beings : (Which Observation, by the by, furnishes us, as has been † before noted, with an excellent natural Demonstration of Providence.) Consequently there is no such thing, as what Men commonly call the *Course of Nature*, or the *Power of Nature*. The Course of Nature, truly and properly speaking, is nothing else but the *Will of God* producing certain Effects in a continued, regular, constant and uniform Manner : Which Course or Manner of Acting, being in every moment perfectly *Arbitrary*, is as easie to be *altered* at any time, as to be *preserved*. And if, (as seems most probable,) this continual Acting upon Matter, be performed by the subserviency of created Intelligences, appointed to that purpose by the Supreme Creator ; then it is as easy for any of Them, and as much within their natural Power, (by the Permission of God,) to *alter* the Course of Nature at any time, or in any re-

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spect ; as it is, to *preserve* or *continue* it.

*That therefore a Miracle is not rightly defined to be That which is against the Course of Nature, or above the natural Powers of Created Agents.*

'Tis not therefore a right Distinction, to define a *Miracle* to be That which is *against the Course of Nature* : meaning by the *Course of Nature*, the *Power of Nature*, or the *Natural Powers of Created Agents*. For, in this Sense, 'tis no more against the Course of Nature, for an Angel to *keep a Man from sinking in the Water*, than for a Man to *hold a Stone from falling in the Air*, by over-powering the Law of Gravitation ; And yet the one is a Miracle, the other not so. In like manner, 'tis no more above the natural Power of a created Intelligence, to *stop the Motion of the Sun* or of a Planet, than to *continue to carry it on in its usual Course* ; And yet the former is a Miracle, the latter not so. But if by the *Course of Nature*, be meant only (as it truly signifies) the *constant and uniform manner* of Gods acting either immediately or mediately in preserving and continuing the Order of the World ; then, in that Sense, indeed a Miracle may be rightly defined to be an effect produced contrary to the usual Course or Order of Nature, by the unusual Interposition  
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of some Intelligent Being Superiour to Men ; as I shall have occasion presently to observe more particularly.

And from this Observation, we may easily discover the Vanity and Unreasonableness of that obstinate Prejudice, which Modern Deists have universally taken up, against the Belief of Miracles in general. They see that things generally go on, in a constant and regular method ; that the Frame and Order of the World, is preserved by things being disposed and managed in an Uniform manner ; that certain Causes produce certain Effects in a continued Succession, according to certain fixed Laws or Rules : And from hence they conclude, very weakly and unphilosophically, that there are in *Matter* certain necessary *Laws* or *Powers*, the Result of which is That which they call the *Course of Nature*, which they think is impossible to be changed or altered, and consequently that there can be no such thing as *Miracles*. Whereas on the contrary, if they would consider things duly, they could not but see, that dull and lifeless *Matter* is utterly incapable of obeying any *Laws*, or of being induced with any *Powers* ; and that there-

*The unreasonableness of those who deny the Possibility of Miracles in general.*



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fore That Order and Disposition of Things, which they vulgarly call the *Course of Nature*, cannot possibly be any thing else, but the *Arbitrary Will and Pleasure of God* exerting it self and acting upon Matter continually, either immediately by it self, or mediately by some subordinate Intelligent Agents, according to certain Rules of uniformity and proportion, fixed indeed and constant, but which yet are made such merely by Arbitrary Constitution, not by any manner of Necessity in the things themselves; as has been abundantly proved in my former *Discourse*: And consequently it cannot be denied, but that it is altogether as easy to *alter the Course of Nature*, as to *preserve it*; that is, that Miracles, excepting only that they are more unusual, are *in themselves*, and *in the nature and reason of the thing*, as credible in all respects, and as easy to be believed, as any of those we call natural Effects.

Some Effects prove the constant Providence of God, and Others prove the occasional Interposition either of God himself, or of some Intelligent Being Superior to Man.

4. Those Effects which are produced in the World regularly and constantly, which we call the *Works of Nature*; prove to us in general the Being, the Power, and the other Attributes of God: Those Effects, which, upon any

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*rare and extraordinary Occasion*, are produced in such manner, that 'tis manifest they could neither have been done by any *Power or Art of Man*, nor by what we call *Chance*, that is, by any Composition or Result of those Laws which are Gods *constant and uniform* Actings upon Matter; These undeniably prove to us the immediate and *occasional* Interposition either of God himself, or at least of some Intelligent Agent superiour to Men, at that particular Time, and on that particular Account. For example: The regular and continual Effects of the *Power of Gravitation*, and of the *Laws of Motion*; of the *Mechanick*, and of the *Animal Powers*; All these prove to us in general the Being, the Power, the Presence, and the constant Operation, either immediate or mediate, of God in the World. But if, upon any particular Occasion, we should see a *Stone suspended in the Air*, or a *Man walking upon the Water*, without any visible support; a *chronical disease cured with a word speaking*, or a *dead and corrupted body restored to life in a moment*; We could not then doubt, but there was an *extraordinary* Interposition either of

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God himself, in order to signify his pleasure upon that particular occasion; or at least of some Intelligent Agent far superiour to Man, in order to bring about some particular design.

*Whether such Interposition be the immediate Work of God, or of some Good or Evil Angel; can hardly be discovered merely by the Work it self.*

5. Whether such an Extraordinary Interposition of some Power Superiour to Men, be the immediate Interposition of *God Himself*, or of some *good Angel*, or of some *evil Angel*; can hardly be distinguished certainly, merely by the *Work or Miracle it self*: (except there be a plain *Creation* of something out of nothing, which, as I have said, there does not *certainly* appear to be in any of the Miracles recorded in Scripture:) Because it is impossible for Us to know with any *certainly*, either that the natural Power of good Angels, or of evil ones, extends not beyond such or such a certain limit; or that God always restrains them from exercising their natural Powers in producing such or such particular Effects. Some singular Miracles, such as *Raising the Dead*, there is indeed all the reason in the World to believe are absolutely beyond the power of evil Spirits to effect; because we have all reason to believe that the Souls of Men are in the Hand of God, and



and cannot be removed by the natural Power of any Inferior Beings: But there are not many other Instances, wherein we can *certainly* say or determine, that this or that particular thing is absolutely beyond the natural Power of Good or Evil Spirits.

'Tis not therefore a right Distinction, to suppose the Wonders which the Scripture attributes to Evil Spirits, to be mere *Præstigia, Sleights, or Delusions*. For if the Devil has any natural Power of doing any thing at all, even but so much as the meanest of Men; and be not restrained by God from exercising that natural Power; 'tis evident he will be able, by reason of his Invisibilty, to work *true and real Miracles*. Neither is it a right Distinction, to suppose the Miracles of Evil Spirits, not to be *real Effects* in the things where they appear, but *Impositions upon the Senses* of the Spectators: For, to impose in this manner upon the Senses of Men, (not by Sleights and Delusions; but by really so affecting the Organs of Sense, as to make things appear what they are not;) is to all intents and purposes as *true a Miracle*, and as *great an one*, as making

*That there is no reason to suppose all the Wonders worked by Evil Spirits, to be mere Delusions.*

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king real changes in the Things themselves.

*How we  
are to di-  
stinguish  
Miracles  
wrought by  
God for the  
proof of any  
Doctrine,  
from the  
Frauds of  
Evil Spi-  
rits.*

6. When therefore upon any particular Occasion ; for instance, when at the Will of a Person who teaches some new Doctrine as coming from God, and in Testimony to the Truth of that Doctrine, there is plainly and manifestly an Interposition of some *Superiour* Power, producing such miraculous Effects as have been before mentioned : The only possible ways, by which a Spectator may certainly and infallibly distinguish, whether those Miracles be indeed the Works either immediately of God himself, or (which is the very same thing) of some Good Angel employed by him ; and consequently the Doctrine witnessed by the Miracles, be infallibly true and divinely attested ; Or whether, on the contrary, the Miracles be the works of Evil Spirits, and consequently the Doctrine a fraud and imposition upon Men : The only possible ways, I say, of distinguishing this matter certainly and infallibly, are these. If the Doctrine attested by Miracles, be in it self *impious*, or manifestly *tending to promote Vice* ; then without all question the  
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Miracles, how great soever they may appear to Us, are neither wrought by God himself, nor by his Commission; because our natural knowledge of the Attributes of God, and of the necessary difference between Good and Evil, is greatly of more force to prove any such Doctrine to be false, than any Miracles in the World can be to prove it true: As for example, suppose a Man pretending to be a Prophet, should work any Miracle, or give any Sign or Wonder whatsoever, in order to draw Men from the Worship of the True God, and tempt them to Idolatry, and to the Practise of such Vices, as in all Heathen Nations have usually attended the Worship of False Gods; nothing can be more infallibly certain, than that such Miracles ought at first sight to be rejected as Diabolical. *If the Doctrine attested by Miracles, be in it self indifferent, that is,* Deut. 13, 1, &c. such as cannot by the Light of Nature and right Reason alone, be certainly known whether it be true or false; and at the same time, in opposition to it, and in proof of the direct contrary Doctrine, there be wrought other Miracles, more and greater than the former,



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mer, or at least attended with such Circumstances, as evidently show the Power by which these latter are worked, to be superiour to the Power that worked the former ; then that Doctrine which is attested by the *Superiour Power*, must necessarily be believed to be Divine : This was the Case of *Moses*, and the *Ægyptian Magicians* : The *Magicians* worked several Miracles to prove that *Moses* was an Impostour, and not sent of God ; *Moses*, to prove his Divine Commission, worked Miracles *more* and *greater* than theirs ; or else (which is the very same thing,) the Power by which *He* worked his Miracles, restrained the Power by which *They* worked theirs, from being able at that time to work all the same Miracles that *He* did ; and so appeared evidently the *Superiour Power* : Wherefore it was necessarily to be believed, that *Moses's* Commission was truly from God. If, in the last place, the Doctrine attested by Miracles, be such as in its own Nature and Consequences tends to promote the Honour and Glory of God, and the practise of universal Righteousness amongst Men ; and yet nevertheless be not in it self de-

mon-

monstrable, nor could without Revelation have been discovered to be actually true ; (or even if it was but only indifferent in it self, and such as could not be proved to be any way contrary to, or inconsistent with these great Ends ;) and there be no pretense of more or greater Miracles on the opposite side, to contradict it ; (Which is the Case of the *Doctrine* and *Miracles* of *Christ* :) Then the Miracles are unquestionably Divine, and the Doctrine must without all controversy be acknowledged as an immediate and infallible Revelation from God : Because, (besides that it cannot be supposed that Evil Spirits would overthrow their own Power and Kingdom ;) should God in such cases as these, permit Evil Spirits to work Miracles to impose upon Men, the Errour would be absolutely invincible ; and That would in all respects be the very same thing, as if God worked the Miracles to deceive Men himself. No Man can doubt, but Evil Spirits, if they have any natural Powers at all, have power to destroy Mens *Bodies* and *Lives*, and to bring upon Men innumerable other Calamities ; which yet in Fact 'tis evident

Mat. 12,  
25.

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dent God restrains them from doing, by having set them Laws and Bounds which they cannot pass. Now, for the very same reason, it is infinitely certain that God restrains them likewise from imposing upon Mens *Minds* and *Understandings*, in all such Cases where Wise and Honest and Virtuous Men would have no possible way left, by which they could discover the Imposition.

*The difference between those who teach that the immediate power of God is, or is not, necessarily requisite to the working of a Miracle; is not very great at bottom.*

And here at last the difference between Those who believe that all Miracles necessarily require the immediate Power of God himself to effect them, and Those who believe created Spirits able to work Miracles, is not very great. They who believe all Miracles to be effected only by the *immediate Power of God*, must do it upon this Ground, that they suppose God by a perpetual Law restrains all subordinate Intelligent Agents from interposing at any time to alter the regular course of things in this lower World: (for to say that created Spirits have not otherwise a *Natural Power*, when *unrestrained*, to do what we call Miracles; is saying that those Invisible Agents have no Power naturally to do any thing at all :) And they who believe that *subordi-*



ordinate Beings have Power to work Miracles, must yet of Necessity suppose that God restrains them in all such Cases at least, where there would not be sufficient Marks left, by which the Frauds of Evil Spirits could be clearly distinguished from the Testimony and Commission of God.

And now from these few clear and undeniable Propositions, it evidently follows ;

1<sup>st</sup>. That the true Definition of a Miracle, in the Theological Sense of the Word, is this ; that it is a work effected in a manner unusual, or different from the common and regular Method of Providence, by the interposition either of God himself, or of some Intelligent Agent superiour to Man, for the Proof or Evidence of some particular Doctrine, or in attestation to the Authority of some particular Person. And if a Miracle so worked, be not opposed by some plainly superiour Power ; nor be brought to attest a Doctrine either *contradictory* in it self, or *vicious* in its consequences ; (a Doctrine of which kind, no Miracles in the World can be sufficient to prove ; ) then the Doctrine so attested must necessarily

*The true  
Definition  
of a Miracle.*

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ly be lookt upon as Divine, and the Worker of the Miracle entertained as having infallibly a Commission from God.

*The  
Strength of  
the Evi-  
dence of  
our Savi-  
ours Mira-  
cles.*

2. From hence it appears, that the complete *Demonstration* of our Saviours being a Teacher sent from God, was, to the Disciples who *saw his Miracles*, plainly This: That the *Doctrine* he taught, being in it self possible, and in its consequences Tending to promote the Honour of God and true Righteousness among Men; and the *Miracles* he worked, being such, that there neither was nor could be any pretense of more or greater Miracles to be set up in opposition to them; it was as infallibly certain that he had truly a Divine Commission, as it was certain that God would not himself impose upon Men a necessary and invincible Errour.

*Concerning  
the Obje-  
ction, that  
we prove in  
a Circle the  
Miracles  
by the Do-  
ctrine, and  
the Do-  
ctrine by the  
Miracles.*

3. From hence it appears how little reason there is, to object, as some have done, that we prove in a Circle the *Doctrine* by the *Miracles*, and the *Miracles* by the *Doctrine*. For the *Miracles*, in this way of reasoning, are not at all proved by the *Doctrine*; but only the *possibility* and the good *Tendency*, or at least the *Indifferency* of the *Doctrin*e,

Doctrine, are a necessary Condition or Circumstance, without which the *Doctrine* is not capable of being proved by any *Miracles*. They are indeed the *Miracles* only, that prove the *Doctrine*; and not the *Doctrine*, that proves the *Miracles*: But then in order to this End, that the *Miracles* may prove the *Doctrine*, it is always necessarily to be first supposed that the *Doctrine* be such as is in its nature capable of being proved by *Miracles*. The *Doctrine* must be in it self *possible* and *capable to be proved*, and then *Miracles* will prove it to be *actually and certainly* true. The *Doctrine* is not first known or supposed to be *true*, and then the *Miracles* proved by it; But the *Doctrine* must be first known to be such as is *possible to be true*, and then *Miracles* will prove that it *actually* is so. Some Doctrines are in their own nature *necessarily and demonstrably* true, such as are all those which concern the obligation of plain *moral Precepts*; And these neither need nor can receive any stronger proof from *Miracles*, than what they have already (though not perhaps so clearly indeed to all Capacities.)



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cities,) from the Evidence of right Reason. Other Doctrines are in their own Nature *necessarily false and impossible to be true* ; such as are all *Absurdities and Contradictions* , and all Doctrines that tend to promote *Vice* ; And these can never receive any degree of proof, from all the Miracles in the World. Lastly, Other Doctrines are in their own Nature *indifferent, or possible, or perhaps probable to be true* ; And these could not have been known to be positively true, but by the Evidence of Miracles, which prove them to be certain. To apply this to the *Doctrine and Miracles of Christ*. The moral part of our Saviours Doctrine would have appeared infallibly true, whether he had ever worked any Miracles or no. The rest of his Doctrine was what evidently Tended to promote the Honour of God, and the practise of Righteousness amongst Men: Therefore that part also of his Doctrine, was possible and very probable to be true ; But yet it could not from thence be known to be certainly true, nor ought to have been received as a Revelation from God, unless it had been proved by undeniable *Miracles*. And  
the

the Miracles he worked, did indeed undeniably prove it to be the Doctrine of God. Nevertheless, had his Doctrine in any part of it been either absurd and contradictory in it self, or vicious in its Tendency and Consequences; no Miracles could then possibly have proved it to have been true. 'Tis evident therefore that the Nature of the Doctrine to be proved, must be taken into the Consideration, as a necessary Circumstance; and yet, that only the *Miracles* are properly the proof of the *Doctrine*; and not the *Doctrine*, of the *Miracles*.

4. From hence it follows, that the pretended Miracles of *Apollonius Tyanus*, *Aristeus Proconnesius*, and some few others among the Heathens, even supposing them to have been *true Miracles*, (which yet there is no Reason at all to believe, because they are very poorly attested, and are in themselves very mean and trifling, as has been fully shown by *Eusebius* in his Book against *Hierocles*, and by many late Writers; but supposing them, I say, to have been *true Miracles*,) yet they will prove nothing at all to the disadvantage

*of the pretended Miracles of Apollonius and others.*

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vantage of Christianity ; Because they were worked either without any pretense of confirming any new Doctrine at all ; or else to prove absurd and foolish Things ; or to establish Idolatry and the Worship of False Gods ; And consequently they could not be done by the divine Power and Autho-

rity, nor bear any kind of \* comparison with the Miracles of *Christ*, which were worked to attest a Doctrine that tended in the highest degree to promote the Honour of God and the general Reformation of Mankind.

\* Διὰ τὴν ἐκτὸς καὶ βεβαιωμένην τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τῆς δυνάμεως ἡξετάσμεν ἀπὸ τῆς βίβης καὶ τῆς ἡθικῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπακολούθου τῆς δυνάμεως, ἥτοι εἰς βλάβην καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἢ εἰς ἡθικὴν ἐπαύρῳσιν; Origen. advers. Cels. lib. 2.

Μέσσην τοίνυν σαυτὸν εἰσάγει τὸν καὶ τῆς Ἀεισεύου γινώσκων, καὶ τὸν καὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ἰσχυμένων, ἴδε εἰ μὴ ἐκ τῆς ἀποδείξεως, καὶ τῆς ἀφελυμένων εἰς ἡθικὴν ἐπαύρῳσιν, καὶ ἐυλαβίαν τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεόν, ὅτιν ἡ πᾶν ὅτι πᾶν εἰς τὸν μὲν ὡς ἐκ ἀθανάτου γινώσκοντες τοῖς καὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ἰσχυμένοις, ἐκ τῶν τοῖς περὶ τῆς Προκοπῆς Ἀεισεύου. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ βεβαιωμένη ἡ πρὸς τοῖς τὰ περὶ τὸν Ἀεισεύου ἀποδείξεως ἐπεχρηματίζεται, καὶ ἡ ἀφελῆται τὰ πᾶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ βεβαιωμένη, τὰ πᾶν καὶ (ὡς οἱ) ἐπεδείκνυτο, ἐκ ἐκείνης λέγειν. Id. lib. 3.

To return therefore to the Argument. The Miracles, I say, which our Saviour wrought, were *to the Disciples that saw them*, sensible Demonstrations of his Divine Commission. And *to those who have lived since that Age*, they are



are as certain Demonstrations of the same Truth, as the *Testimony* of those first Disciples who were Eye-witnesses of them, is certain and true : *Which I shall have occasion to consider presently.*

Secondly, The Divine Authority of the Christian Revelation, is positively <sup>of the full-  
filling the</sup> and directly proved, by the *Exact* <sup>Prophecies,  
as an Evi-</sup> Completion both of all those Prophecies <sup>dence of</sup> that went before concerning our Lord, <sup>our Savi-  
ours Di-</sup> and of those that He himself delivered <sup>vine Com-  
mission.</sup> concerning things that were to happen after.

Concerning the Messiah it was fore- <sup>of the</sup> told, (*Gen. 49, 10,*) that he <sup>Prophecies</sup> should <sup>that went</sup> come, before the Scepter departed from <sup>before,</sup> Judah : And accordingly Christ ap- <sup>concerning</sup> peared about the Time when the <sup>the Messi-</sup> Jewish Government was destroyed and subjected to the Romans. It was fore- told that he should come before the Destruction of the second Temple, (*Hagg. 2, 7,*) *The desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts ; The glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former : And accordingly Christ appeared, some time before the De-*

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struction of the City and Temple. It was foretold that he should come at the End of 490 Years, after the rebuilding of *Jerusalem* which had been laid waste during the Captivity, (*Dan.* 9, 24;) and that he should *be cut off*; and that after That, *the City and Sanctuary should be destroyed and made desolate*: And accordingly, at what time soever the beginning of the four hundred and ninety years can, according to any Interpretation of the words, be fixt; the End of them will fall about the Time of Christs appearing; and 'tis well known how entirely the *City and Sanctuary* were destroyed, some years after *his being cut off*. It was foretold that he should do many great and beneficial Miracles; that *the Eyes of the Blind* (*Isai.* 35, 5,) *should be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf unstopped*; that *the lame Man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the Dumb sing*: And this was literally fulfilled in the Miracles of Christ; *The Blind received their Sight*, (*Mat.* 11, 5,) *and the lame walked; the deaf heard, &c.* It was foretold that he should die a violent death, (*Isai.* 53, throughout,) and

and that *not for himself*, (Dan. 9, 26,) but for *our Transgressions*, (Isai. 53 ; 5, 6, & 12,) for *the iniquity of us all*, and that he might bear *the Sin of many* : All which, was exactly accomplished in the Sufferings of Christ. It was foretold, (Gen. 49, 10,) that *to him* should *the gathering of the people be*, and (Psal. 2, 8,) that God would *give him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession* : which was punctually fulfilled by the wonderful Success of the Gospel, and its universal spreading through the World. Lastly, Many minuter Circumstances were foretold of the Messiah ; that he should be of the *Tribe of Judah*, and of the *seed of David* ; that he should be born in the Town of *Bethlehem*, (Mic. 5, 2 ; ) that he should *ride upon an Ass* in humble Triumph into the City Jerusalem, (Zech. 9, 9 ; ) that he should be *sold for thirty pieces of Silver*, (Zech. 11, 12 ; ) that he should be *Scourged, buffeted, and spit upon*, (Isai. 50, 6 ; ) that *his Hands and Feet* should be *pierced*, (Psal. 22, 16 ; ) that he should be numbred among Malefa-



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scours, (*Isai. 53, 12 ;*) that he should have *gall and vinegar* offered him to drink, (*Psal. 69, 21 ;*) that they who saw him crucified, should *mock* at him, and at his *trusting in God to deliver him*, (*Psal. 22, 8 ;*) that the Soldiers should *cast lots for his garments*, (*Psal. 22, 18 ;*) that he should *make his grave with the Rich*, (*Isai. 53, 9 ;*) and that he should rise again without *seeing Corruption*, (*Psal. 16, 10.*) All which Circumstances were fulfilled to the greatest possible exactness, in the person of *Christ*: Not to mention the numberless *typical* representations, which had likewise evidently their complete Accomplishment in *Him*. And 'tis no less evident, that none of these Prophecies can possibly be applied to any other Person, that ever pretended to be the Messiah.

Of the  
Prophecies  
that Christ  
himself de-  
livered.  
concerning  
things that  
were to  
happen af-  
ter.

Further, The Prophecies or Predictions which Christ delivered Himself, concerning things that were to happen *after*; are no less strong proofs of the Truth and Divine Authority of his Doctrine; than the Prophecies were, which went *before* concerning Him. He did very particularly and at several times

times foretell his own Death, and the Circumstances of it, (*Mat. 16, 21 ;*) that the *chief Priests and Scribes should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, that is, to Pilate and the Roman Soldiers, to mock and scourge and crucify him, (Mat. 20, 18 & 19 ;)* that he should be *betrayed into their hands, (Mat. 20, 18 ;)* that *Judas Iscariot* was the person who would *betray him, (Mat. 26, 23 ;)* that all his Disciples would *forsake him and flee, (Mat. 26, 31 ;)* that *Peter* particularly, would *thrice deny him in one night, (Mar. 14, 30.)* He foretold further, that he would *rise again the third day, (Mat. 16, 21 ;)* that, after his Ascension, he would send down the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, (*Joh. 15, 26 ;*) which should enable them to work many Miracles, (*Mar. 16, 17.)* He foretold also the *Destruction of Jerusalem* with such very particular Circumstances, in the whole 24<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *St Matthew*, and 13<sup>th</sup> of *St Mark*, and 21<sup>st</sup> of *St Luke* ; that no Man who reads *Josephus's* History of that dreadful and unparalleled Calamity, can, without the greatest Obstinacy

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stinacy imaginable, doubt of our Saviours divine Fore-knowledge. Lastly, He foretold likewise many particulars concerning the future Success of the Gospel, and what should happen to several of his Disciples: He foretold what opposition and persecution they should meet withal in their preaching, (*Mat.* 10, 17;) He foretold what particular kind of death *St Peter* should die, (*Joh.* 21, 18;) and hinted, that *St John* should live till after the destruction of Jerusalem, (*Joh.* 21, 22;) and foretold, that notwithstanding all Opposition and Persecutions, the Gospel should yet have such Success, as to spread it self over the World, (*Mat.* 16, 18; 24, 14; 28, 19.) All and every one of which particulars, were exactly accomplished, without failing in any respect.

Some of these things are of permanent and visible Effects, even unto this day. But the greatest part of them were *sensible and ocular Demonstrations* of the Truth of our Lords Doctrine, only to those persons who lived at the Time when they happened. Wherefore,

*Thirdly,*



*Thirdly,* The chief Evidence of the of the Te-  
 Facts on which the Truth and Certainty stimony of  
 of the Christian Revelation depends, our Savi-  
 to *Us who live Now at this distance of* ours Dis-  
*Time,* is the *Testimony of our Saviour's* an Evi-  
*Followers* ; Which in all its Circum- dence of  
 stances, was the most credible, certain, the Truth  
 and convincing Evidence, that was e- of the  
 ver given to any Matter of Fact in the Christian  
 World. Revela-  
tion.

To make the Testimony of our Sa- What  
 viours Followers a sufficient Evidence things are  
 to Us in this Case, there can be requi- requisite  
 red but these three things. *1st.* That to make  
 it be certain, the Apostles could not be the Testi-  
 imposed upon *Themselves*. *2.* That mony of  
 it be certain, they neither had nor could our Savi-  
 have any design to impose upon *Others*. ours Disci-  
 And *3.* That it be certain, their Testi- ples a com-  
 mony is *truly conveyed down* to us, un- plete Evi-  
 to this Day. All which things are in- dence.  
 deed abundantly certain, and clear e-  
 nough to satisfy any reasonable and  
 unprejudiced Person.

For *1.* That the Apostles could not That the  
 be imposed upon *Themselves*, is evident Apostles  
 from what has been already said con- could not  
 cerning the *Nature and Number and Pub-* be imposed  
*lickness* upon, them-  
selves.

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*lickness* of our Saviours *Miracles*. They conversed from the beginning with our Saviour himself; They *heard* with their Ears, and *saw* with their Eyes; they *looked upon*, and they *handled with their Hands of the Word of Life*, as St *John* expresses it, 1 *John* 1, 1. They saw all the *Prophecies* of the Old Testament precisely *fulfilled* in his *Life* and *Doctrine*, his *Sufferings* and *Death*. They saw him *confirm* what he taught, with such *mighty* and *evident* *Miracles*, as his bitterest and most malicious Enemies could not but confess to be supernatural, even at the same time that they obstinately blasphemed the Holy Spirit that wrought them. They saw him *alive after his Passion*, by many *infallible Proofs*; he appearing, not only to one or two, but to all the Eleven, several times; and once, to above five hundred together. And this, not merely in a transient manner; but they conversed with him familiarly for no less than forty Days; and at last they beheld him ascend visibly into Heaven; and quickly after, they received the Spirit, according to his Promise. These were such sensible *Demonstrations* of his being a Teacher

Teacher sent from Heaven, and consequently that his Doctrine was an immediate and express Revelation of the Will of God ; that if the Apostles, even though they had been Men of the weakest Judgments and strongest Imaginations that can be supposed, could be all and every one of them deceived in all these several Instances ; Men can have no use of their Senses, nor any possible Proof of any Facts whatsoever ; nor any means to distinguish the best attested Truths in the World, from Enthusiastick Imaginations.

2. It is certain, the Apostles neither had nor could have any design of imposing upon Others. This is evident both from the Nature of the things they did and suffered, and from the Characters of the Persons themselves. They confirmed what they taught, by *Signs and Miracles* ; they *lived* according to the Doctrine they *preached*, though manifestly contrary to all the Interests and Pleasures of this present World ; and, which Deceivers can never be supposed to do, they *died* with all imaginable cheerfulness and joy of Mind, for the Testimony of their Doctrine,

and

*That the Apostles could have no design of imposing upon others.*



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and the confirmation of their Religion. They were innocent and plain Men, Men that had no bad Ends to serve, nor Preferment to hope for in the World. Their Religion it self taught them to expect, not dominion and glory, not the praise of Men, nor riches and honour, not power and ease, not pleasure nor profit ; but poverty and want, trouble and vexation, persecution and oppression, imprisonments, banishments and death. These things are not the marks and tokens of Impostors. Besides ; the *Success and Event* of their Undertaking ; that plain and illiterate Men should be able to preach their Doctrine to many different Nations of different Languages, and prevail also in establishing the Belief of it ; that they should all agree exactly in their Testimony, and none of them be prevailed upon either by Hopes or Fears to desert their Companions and discover the Imposture, if there had been any ; These things plainly show, that their Doctrine was more than Humane, and not a Contrivance to impose upon the World. This Argument is excellently urged by *Eusebius*, *As it a thing possible to be conceived*, saith  
\* he,

\* he, that Deceivers and unlearned Men, Men that understood no other language but their mother-tongue, should ever think of attempting so extravagant a thing, as to travel over all Nations ? and not only so, but that they should be able also to accomplish their design, and establish their doctrine in all parts of the World ? Consider moreover how remarkable a thing it is, that they should in no respect disagree one from another, in the Account that they give of the Actions of Christ. For if in all Questions of Fact, and in all Trials at Law, and in all ordinary Disputes, the agreement of several Witnesses is always accounted sufficient to determine satisfactorily the Matter in Question ; is it not an abundant Evidence of the Truth in this case, that Twelve Apostles, and Seventy Disciples, and innumerable other Believers have

born

\* Κακίνο ὃ πῶς ἐ μέν  
ἐκπλήξεως, τὸ πλάνος ἀν-  
δρας καὶ ἰδιώτας, μήτε λα-  
λεῖν μήτε ἀκείναι πλέον τῆ  
πατρὸς φωνῆς ὁπταμένους, μὴ  
μόνον διανοηθῆναι τολμήσει  
περελθεῖν ὅτι τῆ ἡμετέρας  
ἀπάντων φειδοῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ  
περελθόντας κατορθῶσαι τὸ  
ὅπτι δόμα ; σκέψαι ὅτι, ὅτι-  
ον ὅτι, καὶ τὸ μὴδὲν μὴδ-  
μὲς διάφωνον ἵξερεγκεῖν ὅτι  
τῆ περὶ τῶν τῆ Ἰησοῦ λόγων.  
εἰ γὰρ ὅτι πάντων ἀμφιγνο-  
μένων περὶ τῶν ἐντε τοῖς  
καὶ νόμος δικαστηρίοις, καὶ ἐν  
τῇ κρινάϊς ἀμφισβητήται, τῇ  
μαρτύρων συμφωνία καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ  
ἀμφιγνοῦμενον πῶς ἐκ ἀν-  
τὶ ἀλήθειαν ὅτι τῶν δε συζητή-  
σας, δώδεκα μὲν ὄντων Ἀποστόλων,  
ἐξ ὁδομήκοντα ὅτι Μαθητῶν,  
μυριάς τε πλήθους τέτων ἐκ-  
τός, πάντων θαυμαστικῶς συμ-  
φωνίαν ἐπιδεδειγμένων, καὶ  
μαρτυροῦντων γὰρ τοῖς ἰσχυ-  
ροῖς τῆ Ἰησοῦ περὶ τῶν ἐκ  
ἀνιδρωπῆ, διὰ τῆ βασιλείας  
ἰσχυρομένης, καὶ πάσης αἰκίας καὶ  
θανάτου ; Euseb. Demonstrat.  
Evang. lib. 3. cap. 3.

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born witness to the Actions of Christ with the most exact and perfect Agreement among themselves ; and not only so, but have endured also all kinds of Torments, and even Death it self, to confirm their Testimony ? Again: That illiterate Men,

† Κηρύττειν δ' ἀγροῦ καὶ  
ἀνδρας εἰς πάντας τὸ ὄνομα, καὶ τοὺς μὲν αὐτῶν τῶν  
Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ καὶ αὐτῷ  
τε τῇ βασιλικῇ πόλει  
νείμασι, τοὺς δὲ τῇ Περσίᾳ,  
τοὺς δὲ τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ, ἑτέρας  
δὲ τὸ Πάρθων ἔθνος, καὶ αὐ  
πάλιν τὴν Σκυθίαν, πᾶσι δὲ  
ἤδη καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην  
ἔλθειν τὰ ἄκρα, ὅτι τῇ  
Ἰνδῶν οὐράσιν ἤσαν, καὶ ἑτέ  
ρας ὡς τῇ Ὠκεανὸν παρελ  
θεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς καλεσμένας Βρε  
τανικὰς νήσους ταῦτα ἔκ  
ἐγω γε ἠγῶμαι καὶ ἀνθρώπων  
ἔτι, μήτι γε καὶ εὐτελεῖς καὶ  
ἰδιώτας, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ πλά  
τες καὶ ῥήσας. Id. ibid. cap.  
7.

saith † he, should preach the Name of Christ in all parts of the World ; some of them in Rome it self, the Imperial City ; others in Persia ; others, in Armenia ; others, in Parthia ; others, in Scythia ; others, in India and the furthest parts of the World ; and others, beyond the Sea, in the British Isles : This I cannot but think to be a Thing far exceeding the Power of Man ; much more, the power of ignorant and

unlearned Men ; and still much more, the Power of cheats and deceivers. And

\* Οὐδεὶς γὰρ αὐτῶν πρόπο  
τε ἀ συμβάττα τοῖς προα  
κηρυγμένοις τρεῖς, ἐξέστη ἡ ἐταιρεία, καὶ ἀντεκήρυξε τοῖς ἄλλοις, εἰς  
ὅς αὐτῶν τὰ σωτηριώδη. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ζῶντα προσδύει τοὺς ἄλλους  
αὐτῶν, αὐτοχρῆστα καθ' ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἄνθρωπον καὶ δίκην ἐπαποδείξει.  
Id. ibid.

again: No one of them, saith \* he, being ever ter-

rified



rified at the Torments and Deaths of others, forsook his Companions, or ever preached contrary to them, and detected the forgery. Nay, on the contrary, That One, who did forsake his Master in his Lifetime, and betray him to his Enemies; being self-condemned, destroyed himself with his own Hands. And much more to the same purpose, may be found excellently said by the same Author, in the Seventh Chapter of the Third Book of his *Demonstratio Evangelica*.

3. It is very certain, that the Apostles Testimony concerning the Works and Doctrine of Christ, is truly and without corruption conveyed down to Us, even unto this Day. For they left this their Testimony in their Writings: Which Writings have been delivered down to us by an uninterrupted Succession through all intermediate Ages. Their Books were all translated very early into several Languages, and dispersed through all parts of the World; and have most of them been acknowledged to be the genuine Writings of those whose Names they bear, even by the bitterest Enemies of Christianity in all Ages. Passages, containing the most

*That the Apostles Testimony hath been truly conveyed down to Us.*

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material Doctrines, have been cited out of them by numberless Authors, who lived in every Age from the very Days of the Apostles unto this Time : So that there is no room or possibility of any considerable *corruption*, such as might in any wise diminish our certainty of the Truth of the whole. In Summ ; There is no matter of Fact in the World, attested in any History, with so many circumstances of credibility, with so many collateral Evidences, and in every respect attended with so many Marks of Truth ; as This concerning the Doctrine and Works of Christ.

*Of the Authority of the Books of Holy Scripture.*

And here, by the by, it is to be observed, that the peculiar *Authority* which we attribute to the Books of *Holy Scripture* contained in the *New Testament*, is founded in this ; that they were written or dictated by the *Apostles themselves*. The Apostles were indued with the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, at *Pentecost* : And this not only inabled them to preach the Doctrine of Christ with Power, but also effectually secured them from making any error, mistake, or false  
repre-

representation of it : And the very same Authority that by this singular Privilege was added to their *Preaching*, 'tis manifest ought for the same reasons to be equally attributed to their *Writings* also. Now all the Books of the New Testament were either *written* by the Apostles; or, which is the very same thing, *approved and authorized* by them. Most of the Books were uncontrovertedly written by the *Apostles themselves*; St Paul having been made one of that number by a Commission from Heaven, no less visible and sensible, than that which was granted to the rest at *Pentecost*: And those Books which were written by the *Companions* of the Apostles, were either dictated or at least approved and authorized by the Apostles Themselves. Thus *Eusebius* expressly tells us, that St Peter received and approved the Gospel of St Mark, and that \* *it was this approbation that authorized it to be received by the Churches.*

And *Irenæus*; that † *what St Mark wrote, was dictated by St Peter*; and that ||

\* Κυρωσά τὴν γεγραμμένην ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῷ μαρκοῦ.  
*Euseb. Histor. l. 2. c. 15.*

† Marcus discipulus & interpres Petri, quæ a Petro annunciata erant, edidit. *Iren. lib. 3. c. 1.*

|| Lucas sectator Pauli, quod ab illo prædicabatur Evangelium in libro condidit. *Id. Ibid.*  
Vide & *Tertullian*: adv. *Marcion*. lib. 4.



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the Gospel of St Luke, was only a Transcript of St Paul's preaching. And Tertullian in like manner ; that

\* Licet & Marcus quod edidit, Petri adfirmetur, cujus interpretes Marcus ; nam & Luca Digestum, Paulo adscribere solent. Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. 4.

† Ἡ δὲ καὶ Μαρκῆς καὶ Λουκᾶ κατ' αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίων ἡ ἐκδοσὶν πεποιημένων, Ἰωάννῳ συνεξάδελφοί φασιν, ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυροῦντα. Euseb. Hist. 1. 3. c. 24.

\* St Mark was only St Peters Scribe, and St Luke St Pauls. And Eusebius ; that † St John also reviewed the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke, and confirmed the Truth of them. And, to mention no more, the same Historian tells us, that (besides some smaller reasons

drawn from some mistaken Passages in the Book it self) the chief reason why the Authority of the Epistle to the He-

|| Τινὲς ἠδὲ τήνασι ἡ ἑρὸς Ἑβραίων, ἑρὸς ἡ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίαις ὡς μὴ Παύλου ἔσαν αὐτῶν ἀντιλέγεον φήσαντες. Id. lib. 3. c. 3.

brews was questioned by some, was || because they thought it not to be written by St Paul himself.

XV. Lastly, They who will not, by the Arguments and Proofs before-mentioned, be convinced of the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion, and be persuaded to make it the Rule and Guide of all their Actions ; would not be convinced, (so far as to influence their Practice and reform their Lives,) by any other Evidence

## and Revealed Religion. 389

*Evidence whatsoever ; no not though one should rise on purpose from the Dead to endeavour to convince them.*

*That the Evidence which God has afforded us of the Truth of our Religion, is abundantly sufficient.*

From what has been said upon the foregoing Heads, it is abundantly evident, that Men are not called upon to believe the Christian Religion without very reasonable and sufficient Proof ;

much less are they \* required, to set up *Faith* in opposition to *Reason* ; or to believe any thing for that very reason, because it is incredible. On the contrary, God has given us all the Proofs of the Truth of our Religion, that the Nature of the

† Ἄλλοις δὲ, ὅση δύναμις, ὑποδεικτικῶς δι' ἐρωτησίων καὶ ἀποκρίσεων προσερχόμεθα. Οὐδὲ λέγει μὲν (τὸ μὲν χλῆδος ὑπὸ τοῦ Κέλσε ἀρνημένον) ὅτι Πιστεύον, ὅν εἰσηγῆμαί σοι τῶτον ἐστὶν ὅδον Θεῶν, καὶ ἢ δεδεδωκέναι ἀπομύτυλα, ἢ κακολογησάμενα. — Οὐδὲ φησὶν, ταύτην καὶ μᾶλλον πισδεύον. *Origen. adv. Cels. lib. 6.*

Thing would bear, or that were reasonable either for God to give, or Men to expect. And unless God should work upon Men by such Methods, as are wholly inconsistent with the design of Religion and the Nature of Virtue and Vice ; which we are sure he will never do : Nothing could have been done more, than has already been done, to convince Men of the Truth of Religion, and to persuade them to

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embrace their own Happiness. And indeed no *reasonable* Man can fail of being persuaded by the Evidence we now have. For if in *other* Cases, we assent to those things as *certain* and *demonstrated*, which, if our *Faculties of judging and reasoning* do not necessarily deceive us, do upon the most impartial view appear clearly and plainly to be true; there is the same reason why in *Moral* and *Religious* Matters we should look upon those things likewise to be *certain* and *demonstrated*, which upon the exactest and most deliberate judgment that we are capable of making, do appear to us to be as clearly and certainly true, as 'tis certain that our *Faculties* do not *necessarily and unavoidably* deceive us, in all our *judgments* concerning the *Nature of God*, concerning the *proper Happiness of Man*, and concerning the *Difference of Good and Evil*. And if in *other* cases, we always act without the least hesitation, upon the Credit of good and sufficient *Testimony*; and look upon that Man as foolish and ridiculous, who sustains great Losses, or lets slip great Opportunities and Advantages in Business,  
only



only by distrusting the most credible and well attested things in the World ; 'tis plain there is the same reason, why we should do so also in Matters of Religion. So that unless our Actions be determined by some other thing, than by Reason and right Judgment ; the Evidence which we have of the great Truths of Religion, ought to have the same effect upon our Lives and Actions, as if they were proved to us by any other sort of Evidence that could be desired.

'Tis true, the Resurrection of Christ, and his other mighty works, must after all be confessed not to be such ocular Demonstrations of the Truth of his Divine Commission to after-Generations, as they were to those Men who *then lived and saw him and conversed with him.* But since the Matters of Fact are as clearly proved to Us, as 'tis possible for any matter of Fact at that distance of time to be ; since the Evidence of *This*, is as great and greater, than of most of those things on which Men venture the whole of their secular Affairs, and on which they are willing to spend all their time and

*That the Cause of Mens Unbelief, is not want of better Evidence to prove the great Truths of Religion,*

C c 4                      pains ;

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pains ; Since, I say, the case is thus ; He that will rather venture all that he can possibly enjoy, or suffer ; he that will run the hazard of losing Eternal Happiness, and falling into Eternal Misery, rather than believe the *most credible and rational* thing in the World, merely because he does *not see it with his Eyes* ; 'tis plain that That Man does not disbelieve the thing, because he thinks the *Evidence of it not sufficiently strong*, but because 'tis *contrary to some particular Vice of his*, which makes it his *Interest* that it should not be true ; and for *that* reason he *might* also have disbelieved it, tho' he had seen it himself. Men may invent what vain pretenses they please, to excuse their Infidelity and their Wickedness ; But certainly That Man, who can despise the Authority both of Reason and Scripture in conjunction ; who can elude the plainest Evidence of matter of Fact ; who can be deaf to all the promises and kind admonitions of the Gospel, and to all the threatnings and terrible denuntiati-  
ons of the wrath of God, made known in good measure by the Light of Nature, and confirmed by the Addition of express Revelation ; Certainly, I  
say,

say, That Man must have some *other Reason* for his Unbelief, than the pretended Want of sufficient Evidence. Did Men follow the unprejudiced judgment of their own Minds, and the impartial dictates of natural Reason; the least possibility of obtaining eternal Happiness, or the least suspicion of falling into endless Misery, would immediately determine them to make it the great study and business of their Lives, to obtain the one and to avoid the Other. If then we see Men act directly contrary to this natural principle, and almost wholly neglect these things, not only when there is a fair appearance and *Probability* of their being true, which the Light of Nature it self affords; but also when there is all reasonable Evidence given, of their being *certainly* true, by express Revelation in the Gospel; Is it not very plain, that such Men are governed, not by reason and the force of Evidence, but by some *Other* very different *Cause* of their Actions?

What *that Cause* is, is very apparent from the Lives and Actions of most of those persons, who pretend want of  
*But that Wickedness and un-governed Lusts, are the only Causes of obstinate*  
 Evi- Infidelity.



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Evidence to be the ground of their Infidelity. Their *Lusts*, their *Appetites*, their *Affections* are interested : They are Lovers of Vice and Debauchery, and Slaves to Evil Habits and Customs : And therefore they are not willing to discern the Evidence, which would compel them to believe That, which yet they cannot believe with any Comfort, so long as they resolve not to part with their beloved Vices. Their hearts and affections are habitually fixt upon things here *below* ; and therefore they will not attend to the force of any Argument, that would raise their Affections to things *above*. They are enslaved to the sensual pleasures and sinful enjoyments of *Earth* ; and therefore they will not hearken to any reasonable conviction, which would perswade them to relinquish these present gratifications, for the future and more Spiritual joys of *heaven*. The Love of this present World

has \* *blinded* their Eyes ; and therefore they *receive not the Things of the Spirit of God* ; For they

1 Cor. 2, 14.  
\* Ἐνιοὶ ἰσοκρυμένους ἔ-  
χουσιν τὰς ὁφθαλμούς, καὶ μὴ  
βλέποντας τὸ ὥς ἔστιν ἡλίον.  
Οὕτως καὶ σὺ, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἔχεις  
ἰσοκρυμένους τὰς ὁφθαλμούς  
καὶ ψυχῆς σε ἰσὺς ἡμῶν καὶ ἡμῶν πνεύματων  
Theophil. Antioch. l. 1.

are

are foolishness unto them ; neither can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned. In a Word : The true and only reason, why Men love darkness rather than light, is, because their Deeds are evil.

And This reason, affords a sufficient Account indeed, why Men should be very unwilling to believe the doctrines of Christianity. If they are resolved not to reform their Lives, 'tis no wonder they care not to discern the Evidence of those Truths, which must needs make them very uneasy in the midst of the injoyment of all their sinful Pleasures. In this case ; were the Proofs of the Truth of our Religion much stronger than they are, or than they can be imagined or desired to be ; yet still these Men would be in the very same case, and perpetually want stronger and stronger Evidence. 'Tis true, many Men, who Now are conscious and willing to acknowledge, that they act contrary to all the reasonable Evidence and convictions of Religion ; are nevertheless very apt to imagine with themselves, that if the great Truths of Religion were proved to

*And so long as Men are under the Dominion of their Lusts, they would not be convinced, though the evidence of Religion was even much stronger than it is.*

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to them by some stronger Evidence, they *should* by that means be wrought upon to act otherwise than they do. But if the true reason why these Men act thus foolishly, is not because the *Doctrines of Religion* are not sufficiently evidenced, but because *They themselves* are, without allowing themselves time for Consideration, hurried away by some unruly Passions to act directly contrary to all Reason and Evidence ; 'tis plain (unless God should irresistibly compel them) they might well continue to act as they do, though the Evidence of these things were really greater than it is. They are willing fondly to imagine, that if they had lived in our Saviours time ; if they had heard his Preaching, and seen his Miracles ; if they had had the advantage of beholding those mighty Works, which he wrought for the proof of his Divine Commission ; as the Jews then had ; they should not like them have *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, but with all cheerfulness have believed his Doctrine, and embraced his Religion. They *fantie*, they should immediately have become Disciples of Christ ; and that  
the



the Truths which he taught, would have had a most powerful Influence upon the whole course of their Lives. And if their Hearts and Affections were not set upon *this World*, more than upon *the next* ; if they valued not the *present injoyments of Sense*, above the *expectation of the Glory that shall be revealed* ; most certainly they would do the same *now*. But if their Hearts be set upon earthly things, and their Passions be stronger than all the arguments of Reason ; if they *do* indeed so love the Pleasures of Sin now, as that they cannot perswade themselves by all the Motives of Religion to live like Christians ; we need not question to affirm, that they might very well have been in the same case, tho' they *had* lived in our Saviours time. The *Jews* are a notorious and standing Instance, how far prejudice, Envy, Pride and Affection are able to prevail over the strongest Convictions. When our Saviour began to preach that he was sent from God to instruct them in their Duty, they required a *Sign* of him, and they *would believe him* ; but when he had wrought so many Miracles, that *even the World it self*  
could

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Mat. 27,  
22.

*could not contain the Books if they should all be written, they persisted still in their Infidelity. When they saw him hanging upon the Cross, and thought themselves secure of him, they said, Let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe him; but when he arose out of the Grave, wherein he had lain three Days, which was a much greater and more convincing Miracle, they grew more hardned and obstinate in their Unbelief.*

*Nay, not even tho' one should rise on purpose from the Dead to convince them.*

Others there are who imagine, that if they could but be convinced of the Truth of another World by the appearance of one sent directly from that unknown State, they would immediately become new Creatures: But if God should satisfy their unreasonable Demands, by sending one on purpose from the Dead to convince them; there is little room to doubt, but as they hearkened not to *Moses and the Prophets*, to Christ and his Apostles; so *neither would they be persuaded by one rising on purpose from the Dead.* They might indeed be at first surprized and terrified, at the appearance of so unusual and unexpected a Messenger: But,

as

as wicked Men upon a Bed of Sickneſs, at the amazing approach of Death and Eternity, reſolve in the utmoſt anguiſh of Horrou and Deſpair, to amend their Lives and forſake their Sins ; but as ſoon as the Terrour is over and the danger of Death paſt, return to their old Habits of Sin and Folly ; So it is more than probable, it would be in the preſent Caſe. Should God ſend a Meſſenger from the Dead, to aſſure Men of the Certainty of a Future State, and the danger of their preſent Wickedneſs ; aſſoon as the Fright was over, and their preſent terrible Apprehenſions ceaſed, 'tis by no means impoſſible or improbable that their old vicious Habits and beloved Sins ſhould again by degrees prevail over them. Some there are in our preſent Age, who pretend to be convinced of the Being of Spirits by the powerful demonſtration of their own Senſes ; And yet we do not obſerve, that their Lives are more remarkably eminent for exemplary Piety, than other good Mens, who being convinced by the rational Evidence of the Goſpel, go on in a ſober, conſtant, and regular Exerciſe of Virtue and Righteouſneſs. 'Tis



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That therefore, to make Men judge rightly of the Evidence of Religion, it is absolutely necessary in the first place, that laying aside Prejudice, Lust and Passion, they become impartially willing to embrace all Truth, and to obey all reasonable Obligations, which shall at any time be made known to them.

'Tis not therefore for want of sufficient Evidence, that Men disbelieve the great Truths of Religion; but plainly for Want of Integrity and of dealing ingenuously and impartially with themselves, that they suffer not the Arguments of Religion to have that Weight and Influence upon them, which in the judgment of right reason they ought manifestly to have. So long as Men permit their Passions and Appetites to over-rule their Reason, it is impossible they should have due Apprehensions in matters of Religion, or make any right and true Judgment concerning these things. Men that are strongly biased and prejudiced even in worldly affairs, 'tis well known how hard and difficult it is for them to judge according to reason, and to suffer the arguments and evidences of truth to have their due Weight with them. How much more in *matters of Religion*, which concern things future and remote from Sense, must it needs be, that Mens present Interests, Lusts and Passions, will pervert their judgment, and blind their understandings! Wherefore, Men that pretend to be Followers of right Reason

Reason, if they will judge truly of the reasonableness and credibility of the Christian Revelation, it is absolutely necessary that in the first place, in order to That End, they become impartially willing to embrace whatever shall upon the whole appear to be agreeable to Reason and Truth, and grounded upon good Evidence, without interesting their Lusts and Appetites in the judgment; and that before all things they resolve to be guided in all their Actions, by whatever Rule shall at any time be well proved to them to be the Will of God: And when they have put themselves into this Temper and Frame of Mind; then let them try if they can any longer reject the Evidence of the Gospel. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God.* For, *them that are meek, God will guide in judgment; and such as are gentle, them he will learn his way.*

Indeed, Men that are of this good Disposition, willing to be governed by Reason, and not prejudiced by Lusts and Vicious Appetites; could

D d

not

*Joh. 7, 17.  
Ps. 25, 8.  
That Men  
of such a  
Disposition,  
would  
think it  
their great-  
est Wis-  
dom to be  
truly reli-  
gious, even  
though the  
Evidences  
of Religion  
were much  
less than  
they are.*

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not but give their Assent to the Doctrines of Christianity, upon account of the very intrinsick Excellency and Reasonableness of the Things themselves, even though the external Evidence of their Certainty had been much less than it at present is. Nay, were there hardly any other Evidence at all, than barely the Excellency and Reasonableness and natural Probability of the great Truths of Religion, together with the consideration of the vast Importance of them; yet even in That Case it would be infinitely wisest and most agreeable to Reason for Men to live according to the Rules of the Gospel: And though their Faith extended no further, than only to a Belief of the *Possibility* of the Truth of the Christian Revelation; yet even This alone ought in all reason to have weight enough to determine reasonable Creatures, to live *soberly, righteously and godly*. For, *is it not plainly most reasonable, as\**

\* Non-ne purior ratio est, ex duobus incertis & in ambi-

gua expectatione pendentibus, id potius credere, quod aliquas spes ferat, quam quod nullas? In illo enim, periculi nihil est, si, quod dicitur imminere, cassum fiat & vacuum; in hoc, damnum est maximum (id est, salutis amissio,) si, cum tempus advenerit, aperiatur hoc fuisse mendacium. *Arnob. Adv. Gentes, lib. 2.*



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an Antient Writer expresses it, if each of the opposite Opinions were equally doubtful and uncertain, yet by all means to imbrace and entertain That which brings some Hope along with it rather than that which brings none? For on one side of the Question there is no danger at all of incurring any calamity, if that which we believe and expect, should at last prove false; But on the other side, there is the greatest hazard in the World, the loss of eternal Life, if the opinion which Unbelievers rely upon, should at last prove an Error. And † again:

What say ye, O ye ignorant Men, ye Men of miserable and most deplorable Folly? Can ye forbear fearing within your selves, that at least those things may possibly prove true, which ye now despise and mock at? Have ye not at least some misgivings of mind, least possibly That

which ye now perversely and obstinately refuse to believe, ye should at last be convinced of by sad experience, when it

D d 2

† Quid dicitis, o nescii, etiam fletu & miseratione dignissimi? ita non tam extimescitis, ne forte hæc vera sint, quæ sunt despectui vobis & præbent materiam risus? nec saltem vobiscum sub obscuris cogitationibus volvitis, ne, quod hoc die credere obstinata renuitis perversitate, redarguat serum tempus, & irrevocabilis penitentia castiget? Id. ibid.

will

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*will be too late to repent ? Neither is this the judgment of Christian Writers only, but also of the Wisest and more considerate Heathens. We*

|| Χρη πάντα ποιῆν, ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μεταχειρῶν καλὸν καὶ τὸ εὖ θάλλον, καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη. *Plato in Phæd.*

*noble, and*

\* Præclarum nescio quid adepti sunt, qui didicerunt se, cum tempus mortis venisset, totos esse perituros. — Quid habet ista res aut lætabile aut gloriosum ? *Cic. Tusc. Qu. lib. 1.*

*to be boasted*

† Sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti Philosophi censent, nihil sentiam ; non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui philosophi irrideant. *Cic. de Senect.*

*sophers should laugh at me for my Error.*

But this is not *Our Case*. God has afforded *Us*, as has been largely and particularly shown in the foregoing  
Dis-

*ought to spare no pains, saith || Plato, to obtain the Habits of Virtue and Wisdom in this present Life ; For the Prize is noble, and the Hope is very great. And \* Cicero : They have gained a great prize indeed, who have perswaded themselves to believe, that when Death comes they shall perish utterly ; What comfort is there, what is there of, in that Opinion ? And again : If after Death, saith † he, as some little and contemptible Philosophers think, I shall be nothing ; yet there is no danger, that when we are all dead, those Philo-*

Discourse, *many* and *certain* Proofs of the Truth of our Religion; even as *certain*, as any matter of Fact is capable of having. And we now exhort Men to believe, not what is barely *possible*, and *excellent*, and *probable*, and of *the utmost importance* in it self; but what moreover they have all the *positive evidence*, and all the *reason in the World* to oblige them to believe.

To conclude. No Man of reason *That God* can pretend to say, but that God *may* may require us to take notice of require us to *take notice of* some things certain at our peril, to *inquire into* them, and things, and to inquire to *consider* them thoroughly. And pre- into them, tense of want of greater Evidence will and consi- not excuse *Carelessness* or *unreasonable* der them, *Prejudices*; when God has vouchsafed at our pe- us all that Evidence, which was either ril. Fit for him to grant, or Reasonable for Men to desire; or indeed which the Nature of the Thing it self to be proved, was capable of.

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